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## ABSTRACT

Focusing on literature and the teaching of literature, this monograph presents and discusses salient issues, inviting the reader to participate in the dialogue. The first section following the introduction presents reasons for teaching literature and discusses the types, quality, and selection of literature, as well as literature and values. The second section deals with censorship in Canada, focusing on the following: (1) a case study, (2) what constitutes censorship, (3) what happens to challenged materials, (4) censorship and literary quality and effects of literature on students, (5) a challenged materials policy, and (6) challenged books in Canadian schools. The third section treats four aspects of growth in response to literature: early experiences with literature, literature in the elementary school, adolescent literature, and reading and response processes. The fourth section discusses three aspects of the teaching of literature--encouraging interpretation and response, the role of the English/language arts teacher, and literature in the English/language arts curriculum--and includes a selected review of literature in Canadian curricula. Finally, a concluding section reaffirms the place of literature in both the English/Language arts curriculum and the broader context of a humanistic education. A list of over 100 references is appended. (JD)

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## Teaching Literature K-12: A Canadian Perspective

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June 1986

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## INTRODUCTION

The people who will succeed in the future will be those who can read both computer programs and Dostoevsky.

Curriculum Review,

Volume 22, No. 5, 1983,

p. 15.

The poignancy of this statement is that it melds the classical and the contemporary, literature from a bygone era and today's computer technology. The element that both these disparate sources share is language, or more accurately, a symbolic system. One is rich in figurative language, the language of poetics; the other is characterized by its precision, nonambiguity, and efficiency.

Why, then, will future persons living in an age of rapid technological change which values speed and efficiency succeed because of an ability to read Dostoevsky (or D.H. Lawrence, Patrick White, Margaret Atwood)? Because literature has the power to meet human needs, to challenge the imagination to present vistas of the human condition that are not possible to experience throughout a lifetime. And it is these very aspects of humanism and understanding that enhance the ability to imagine, create, foresee possibilities, predict outcomes, and challenge that are so valuable in an era of unprecedented societal and technological evolution.

This monograph is a statement on the role of literature in our contemporary and future world of education reaching from the early childhood years through to the end of formal public schooling and into the postsecondary years. My belief is that literature has a major role to play in the English curriculum, in the humanities, and in the total educational endeavour. However, I realize that literature's place and role is being challenged, and that the role of literature needs to be openly discussed, defended if need be, and reaffirmed so that English teachers and others can go about their work reassured in their endeavours.

In the preparation of this monograph many issues emerged, and herein I attempt to deal with those identified as germane to the teaching of literature and the development, implementation and evaluation of English curricula. Issues are posed, often as questions, and are discussed, but rarely is the reader given a definitive "answer". It would be presumptuous of me to do otherwise. Most decisions dealing with the question of what constitutes literature, what defines good or bad literature, the selection of literature, the values associated with selection and presentation of literature, are going to have to be made by individual teachers, English departments, or school staffs cognizant of the characteristics of their student body, community, and provincial curricula.

The purpose of this monograph on literature and the teaching of literature is to present the salient issues and discuss them in such a way that invites the reader to participate in the dialogue. The monograph is then organized into six major sections. Following the introduction is a rationale for the teaching of literature and a discussion of what constitutes literature,

including types of literature, the issue of quality of literature, and literature and values. Most important in this section is the discussion of selection of literature, the respective roles of teachers and students, and the need for a selection policy. The third section deals with censorship, and a case study of Canadian censorship gives an insight into what has occurred in Canada and how it evolved. Then follows the section on growth in response to literature and the response process. This is followed by the section on the teaching of literature which offers some thoughts on how response can be implemented in classrooms. Finally a concluding section reaffirms the place of literature in not only the English/language arts curriculum but in the broader context of a humanistic education.

## THE 'WHY' AND 'WHAT' OF LITERATURE

### WHY TEACH LITERATURE?

Despite the efforts of a few television historians and critics, like Erik Barnouw and Horace Newcomb, the fact is that the most effective purveyor of language, image, and narrative in American culture has failed to become a subject of lively humanistic discourse. It is laughed at, reviled, feared, and generally treated as persona non grata by university humanities departments and the "serious" journals they patronize. Whether this is the cause or merely a symptom of the precipitous decline of the influence of the humanities during recent years is difficult to say. In either case, it is unfortunate that the scholars and teachers of The Waste Land have found "the vast wasteland" unworthy of their attention. Edward Shils spoke for many literary critics when he chastised those who know better but who still give their attention to works of mass culture, for indulging in "a continuation of childish pleasures." Forgoing a defense of childish pleasures, I cannot imagine an attitude more destructive to the future of both humanistic inquiry and television. If the imagination is to play an epistemological role in a scientific age, it cannot be restricted to "safe" media. Shils teased pop-culture critics for trying to be "folksy"; unfortunately, it is literature that is in danger of becoming a precious antique.

Atlantic Monthly, August 1984, p.34

This statement uncovers many aspects and attitudes in the teaching of literature — quality of literature, traditional versus contemporary literature, literature for enjoyment versus literature for learning — but it does end with a fear that many English/Language Arts teachers harbour to various degrees: is literature as we have known it in danger of being relegated to a dusty shelf? If we believe that, then we are probably prepared to march in defence of literature.



John Dixon, in Growth through English (1975), described the three dominant models of English that had been widely accepted in schools on both sides of the Atlantic at the time of the Dartmouth Seminar of 1966. The first centres on skills, identified in particular as reading, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation, speaking and listening subskills. A skills approach, in Dixon's opinion, has brought almost universal literacy to the western nations, as judged by the literature of the popular press.

The cultural heritage model stresses culture. Literature's purpose is to present experience to the reader so that the reader may develop attitudes and personal evaluation in consonance with and in response to his or her environment. A third model is that of personal growth. Literature becomes a shared experience, and it is through the language of literature that experience becomes real to the reader.

Either of these two latter approaches or a combination of both is reflected in current rationales, explicit or implicit, in English/language arts curriculum documents, textbooks, and programs. A cultural heritage focus is provided in a program for teaching Canadian literature in the high school developed by Ian Underhill and presented in Starting the Ark in the Dark (1977). It is argued that "much of our culture is remembered through our literature", and that "literature affords us another way of looking at where we have been and what we have done" (p. 5). Underhill moves towards a personal growth model in this following statement:

By having our students experience literature, we are

helping them to move towards a key realization; namely, that art is an imitation of life and that literature is an imaginative representation of it. Literature is both similar to, and more than, life itself. It is similar to life because it uses the elements of human existence as its material. (p. 5)

The quotation from Starting the Ark in the Dark is particularly useful because it demonstrates that any attempt to develop a program of study of national or regional literature must embrace a cultural heritage model, because it assumes that a study of national or regional literature is indispensable to a knowledge and understanding of the country or region.

A rationale also used is that the principle reason for using literature is that students may derive pleasure from reading. Such a rationale is justified by references to studies of adult readers of fiction who state that they read for pleasure. Reading for pleasure is a particularly appropriate rationale for the use of literature in early childhood and in varying degrees throughout the elementary school years. Robert Penn Warren warns that fiction does not give us only what we want, that is pleasure without the painful consequences of real-life experience, but more importantly it may give us things we hadn't ever known we wanted.

From Northrop Frye (1963) comes the rationale that literature educates the imagination. Literature presents a vision or model in the mind of the reader of what he or she wants to construct of the world as a

social human form. This imagination plays a crucial role in the scheme of human affairs; it provides the power of constructing possible models of human experience. Literature thus belongs to the world that man constructs, not to the world he sees. "Literature's world is a concrete human world of immediate experience" (p. 8).

This concept of the value of literature is a powerful one because it precludes the argument that the reading of literature inculcates moral values that transfer to actions in the world. The argument that literature inculcates positive and/or negative moral values and attitudes which govern the behavior of the reader is a contentious one, and is best avoided because it can only be based on the personal values and attitudes of those engaged in the argument. In short, values and attitudes exist in readers, not in works of literature.

Louise Rosenblatt articulates a persuasive case for literature in Literature as Exploration (1976). The title of her book suggests her approach: literature needs to be "rescued from its diminished status as a body of subject matter and...offered as a mode of personal life-experience" (p. x). Rosenblatt sees literature as making comprehensible the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities that life offers. Her focus is on the persisting or universal human traits extant in literature, traits that persist despite social and cultural changes. Thus does her rationale differ from those implicit rationales of the cultural heritage and personal growth models.

For Rosenblatt growth occurs only after the student or reader has responded freely to the "text". It is through a critical scrutiny of

their responses - and here the teacher's role is crucial - that readers can come to understand their personal attitudes and gain the maturing perspective needed for a fuller and sounder response to literature.

Literature thus possesses great potential for the assimilation of ideas and attitudes. Readers come to know intimately many personalities; they see with new emotions the conditions and the lives about them. "And these vicarious experiences have at least something of the warmth and color and immediacy of life" (p. 182). Literature can foster the interplay between intellectual perception and emotional drive that is essential to any vital learning process. Rosenblatt's rationale is best expressed in her own words:

Literary works may help him to understand himself and his problems more completely and may liberate him from his secret self-doubting and personal anxieties. Literature's revelation of the diverse elements of our complex cultural heritage may free him from the provincialism of his own necessarily limited environment. Books may often provide him with an image of the kind of personality and way of life that he will seek to achieve. (p. 273)

Robert Protherough in Developing Response to fiction (1983)

believes that teachers instinctively validate their choices of "texts" and methods in terms of their pupils' reactions. He structures into three main groups the perceptions of the major purposes of teaching literature gleaned from discussion with and a survey of teachers.

- (a) Personal functions - stories offer enjoyment, pleasure, relaxation, and develop positive attitudes towards reading; books develop the imagination; books aid personal development and self-understanding, and extend experience and knowledge of life.
- (b) Curricular functions - books develop the pupil's use of language; literature is a basis for other English activities; literature study carries over into other subjects.
- (c) Literary functions - books enjoyed progressively make more demanding works available to the reader; they deepen literary appreciation; they enable the reader to discriminate and evaluate on a wider basis; they help to establish an understanding of the nature of literature and of the course of literary history.

The results of a survey of English teachers in England revealed that teachers of different sexes, ages, and types of schools with little variation agreed that the affective aims of the 'personal' function came first of 100 objectives rated. "What were rated very low were those objectives that might be called 'literary': developing the ability to discriminate, learning to appreciate literary conventions, forms and techniques, gaining knowledge about books and authors" (p. 9).

At the Invitational Conference of the International Federation for Teachers of English (IFTE), November 1984, one of the strands was on language, literature and human values. In a report of this strand or commission to the general conference assembly, a rationale for the teaching of literature was proposed by Garth Boomer (1984). The sense underlying this commission was that there existed a tacit understanding that language

and literature provide the bridge between individual personal autonomy and social responsibility - mankind in society. Because thinking is largely metaphorical the role of literature and the arts in education is crucial.

The IFTE report deemed literature an essential mode of human activity.

Interpretation during and following the experience of making and reading literature can enable children to become more self aware; more sensitive to both the uniqueness of the individual and the shared culture; and more knowledgeable about the ongoing cultural dialogue directed towards great issues which shape people and which they in turn shape. The reading, writing and discussing of literature in schools should aim at enhanced ability to reflect through encounters with diverse texts and with other readers and writers. (pp. 2-3)

The commission affirmed "that the goal of literature teaching is the enfranchisement and empowerment of children as learners and actors in the making of culture" (p. 3).

#### In Defense of Literature

Although the IFTE language, literature and human values commission sought to tacitly defend literature, other associations representing English teachers have taken a public and political position in reaffirming the role of literature in English and in education. In 1976 the Report on

English Language Education in Canada was presented to the Canadian Council of Teachers of English. Chaired by William Prouty of the University of New Brunswick, the Prouty report recommended specifically, in Recommendation 3.a, "that literature is at the core of our culture", and in 3.b, "that literature is the best available influence on written composition".

A similarly-titled report today might not place literature at the core of our culture; it might talk of literature as one of the humanities or one of the aesthetic arts. Similarly, it might make a less extravagant claim for the influence of literature on written composition, and might stress the writing process and the part that personal experience and expressive language plays in the writing process.

The National Council of Teachers of English through its SLATE Committee (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) publicly defended literature in Volume 4, Number 4 (April 1980) of their newsletter. In "Literature as a Basic" the power of literature is seen in three domains — practical, personal, and social.

The practical value of literature is that it develops in students large vocabularies and an ability to use language effectively, including writing. The personal value of literature is that through poems and stories the student can participate in many lives. Literature requires readers to do their own thinking and to be responsible for making meaning. Readers look at characters in literature and ask questions about how and why such characters lived. "Youngsters answering such questions must speak of their own beliefs and values, their own ideas of right and wrong. In

this way literature involves them in the life of moral choice. A teacher who helps young people learn how to think about a story or poem is helping them develop a thoughtful, reflective approach to their own experience". In this way students and readers prepare themselves in imagination for what life may or will bring. The social value of literature is that the life and character of a nation, its ideals and dreams - and its greyer sides - are revealed by its literature.

Another NCTE committee recently defended literature teaching. The Coalition of English Associations, representing college and university English teachers in the United States, met in August 1984 and prepared a public statement entitled "Toward Excellence in English". Their statement begins: "Although most of the reports<sup>1</sup> assert the value of learning to write, they fail to recognize the importance of studying literature." On literature the report writes:

Literature enriches and broadens the experience of life. It plays a significant role in learning to use language well. By studying literature people learn how ideas, emotions, and moral commitments have been fused in language. By learning to analyze and interpret the language of literature

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<sup>1</sup> Among the reports the Coalition reviewed were A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, and Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools. Both are national reports produced recently in the United States.



they learn to deal with ambiguity and to remain wary of answers that close off the possibility of discussion.

Learning how to interpret complex, emotionally intense literary works enables them to improve their own writing and helps them interpret the various forms of communication they encounter in their daily lives.

Learning to interpret literature is a key link between functional literacy and the highest intellectual purposes of learning. (pp. 577-8)

The bias towards literary criticism is definitely evident in the statement, and that approach is not appropriate for elementary students nor for the majority of high school students. However, the statement on selection is more broadly applicable. Rather than establishing a common body of literature, the Coalition recommends that:

Students should read works that help them define and understand their own values and experiences and those of others. All students should read widely in the literature from their own cultures and regions, from the pluralistic American (substitute Canadian) experience and from the world at large.

(p. 578)

Individuals speak eloquently in defense of literature. Deanne Bogdan (1982) brings Northrop Frye to literature's defense by stating that literature needs to be defended in times of social strain, and that it is

more positively regarded as society becomes more confident about its values. Interestingly, Bogdan claims that values education as a specific subject in school curricula "is an attempt to replicate explicitly the values that the study of the humanities transmits implicitly. It is not coincidental that the perceived need for education in values is concurrent with the demise of a liberal education " (p. 205).

Frye argues that a disjunction between art (including literature) and society occurs wherever society relegates art to the periphery of what it deems to be social necessity. In times of economic scarcity, necessity is interpreted in tangible terms, excluding art and literature. Thus literature needs to be defended during such times: literature confers the kinds of knowledge and experience that should become the informing principle of civilized life. (Bogdan, 1982)

Merron Chorny, who has made such an important contribution to Canadian English education, defends literature because of the personal power with which literature infuses our lives. In "Perspectives from Canada: English and Change" (1983) he writes: "I perceive my past through the literature of my memories and respond to it in terms of my present being and time" (pp. 179-180). He continues by introducing the reader roles of spectator and participant, attributed to James Britton.

Literature allows the reader to look at the world as a spectator and enables him to reflect on and evaluate that world and himself in relation to his interests, desires, sentiments, ideals, attitudes and values. But for individual

ends, each reader needs to participate in the process;... .  
(p. 180)

For Ian Hansen (1984) literature is essential because fiction stands between us and "statistical man". He uses this term to refer to mankind in the microchip/technological age, an age where humanness is sacrificed for scientific and technological elegance and efficiency. Hansen, addressing the 1984 CCTE conference, argued that literature is required for survival of the humanities, and for meeting that need in mankind. Literature gives insight into reality, and provides a new view of life. The novel is an imaginative enactment by which we enter worlds we do not know, and through which we relive experiences. He, like Merron Chorny, refers to the value of the spectator role of the reader who looks on and is free to make judgements without having to bear the responsibilities of such judgements.

Finally, Robert Sanford of the University of Manitoba defends the role of literature in schooling in a critique of the new Manitoba English/Language Arts Curriculum. He argues first for a core place in English/Language Arts curricula for literature, and then goes on to state:

In all civilized societies literature, like history and philosophy — and more recently science — has been regarded as an indispensable way of knowing about one's world and about oneself. Historically and logically literature is no more than an adjunct to language learning than history or geography or science.... Literature needs a place of its own,

as a legitimate field of inquiry in its own right. Our young people cannot afford to be without the insights great literature affords into the human condition. (1983, p. 65)

### Objectives for Teaching Literature

Rationales for teaching literature are often implicit in the objectives for including literature in English curricula. It is interesting to look at statements of objectives from two quite different organizations in two actions. The first is from a submission made by the English Teachers' Association of Western Australia to the Beazley Committee of Enquiry into Education. The submission was prepared in response to a proposal to eliminate literature from the English program in favour of Functional English skills. Following a definition of literature the submission identifies some of the functions of literature in an English course as:

- development of an alternative means of perception and ordering of experience,
- development of complexity of expression and response through symbolic representation beyond the scope of logical reasoning,
- development of competence in writing through exploration of alternative modes and forms of expression,
- development of more flexible and adventurous cognitive style through learning to function in the

category of possibility,

- development of aesthetic awareness through encounters with literature as artistic artefact,
- formation of moral, ethical and values systems through exploration of moral attitudes and values systems represented in literature,
- transmission of the cultural heritage through an acquaintance with the historical basis and cultural tradition of poetic mode writing and through exposure to the best that has been written in that tradition.

(English Teachers' Association  
of Western Australia, 1984,  
p. 45)

The National Council of Teachers of English in the United States has reaffirmed the value of a balanced education through its publication in 1979 of Essentials of English: A Document for Reflection and Dialogue (NCTE 1982). Under the subsection "Literature", the rationale goes:

Literature is the verbal expression of the human imagination and one of the primary means by which a culture transmits itself. The reading and study of literature add a special dimension to students' lives by broadening their insights, allowing them to experience vicariously places, people, and events otherwise unavailable to them, and adding

delight and wonder to their daily lives.

Following that introductory statement come the objectives. Through their study and enjoyment of literature, students should

- realize the importance of literature as a mirror of human experience, reflecting human motives, conflicts, and values
- be able to identify with fictional characters in human situations as a means of relating to others; gain insights from involvement with literature
- become aware of important writers representing diverse backgrounds and traditions in literature
- become familiar with masterpieces of literature, both past and present
- develop effective ways of talking and writing about varied forms of literature
- experience literature as a way to appreciate the rhythms and beauty of the language
- develop habits of reading that carry over into adult life.

One further objective under the sub-heading of Reading applies also to literature. It reads that students should "learn to judge literature critically on the basis of personal response and literary quality".

In summary, there are many arguments for the importance of literature in the English curriculum, and in the total enterprise of schooling. But further than formal schooling it is hoped that students

will develop a lifelong love of literature; attitudes towards literature more than anything else are being formed during the school years.

In short, literature is particularly suited to the development of:

1. an alternative means of perception and ordering of experience which allows the integration of personal mood, attitude and feeling into the cultural pattern;
2. complexity of expression and response through symbolic expression that is beyond the scope of logical reasoning;
3. adventurous, speculative thinking and theorizing in both the sciences and arts through the concept of possibility;
4. the medium of integration within the individual permitting control of the real world as an object, and freeing the individual to act affectively in that world;
5. a more flexible response and adventurous cognitive style.

(O'Neill, 1984, p. 26)

Literature must have more diverse and diffuse roles than transmission of the cultural heritage and provision of models for writing. Approaches to the teaching of literature have tended to ignore the psychological significance of literature for personal growth — cognitive, affective, and sociocultural. The functions of literature suggest that it might contribute to the psychological development of the individual in the following ways:

1. Formation of a social construct of reality. (Literature can present possible ways for society to be or become.)
2. Escape from reality.

3. Construction and reconstruction of self. (Literature can present possible ways of being and possible courses of action not available to the individual otherwise. The reader is able to live through the experiences in the persona of a character who possesses characteristics markedly different from his own).
4. Provision of vicarious experience. (Literature may encourage empathy with others, and broaden readers' perceptions of others).
5. Formation of moral and ethical values systems.  
(Literature involves a wide range of human concerns, and presents moral attitudes and unvoiced systems of values to which the reader must respond; through the consideration of various value systems the reader may reshape individual values without threat to self).
6. Development and satisfaction of an aesthetic awareness.

(O'Neill, 1984, pp. 26, 27).

Don Gutteridge (personal communication, 1985) admonishes that no literature programme can work without some attention to each of the forces that constrain objectives. Thus the 'balance' between personal and social, psychological and cultural, pleasure and aesthetics objectives are partly political decisions to be made in and by each community. Therefore no commission such as this one can ever suggest a 'correct' or 'proper' or 'right' approach among legitimate variables which have authentic community normative entailments.



What Is Literature?

Rationalizing the role of literature in the curriculum is a simpler task than defining literature. Literature has traditionally been defined by genre (novels, plays, short stories, poetry, essays), by modes of discourse (narrative, expository, argumentative, descriptive), by time periods (Elizabethan, Restoration, Victorian, Twentieth Century), by nationality (British, Canadian, American), or by quality (traditional, classics). Within each of these was also a tendency to develop different canons for different levels, such as elementary school, high school, and university where the 'real classics' were studied.

Definition by various means of categorization depended upon the purposes for teaching literature and the philosophy of literature and literature teaching. The problem with a definitive definition of literature is that it fixes the manner in which literature is selected, organized, presented, and taught. If literature can be considered as something different from the texts themselves, then the purposes of teachers and readers may be considered, and a flexible approach to selection, organization, and pedagogy is permitted. That will be the approach adopted in this chapter.

If we define literature as that canon of texts which have been recognized tacitly as such throughout literary history then students are encouraged to stand passively before them, in a state of homage. Similarly students know that their writing can never compare favourably with the works of literary immortals. But if literature is seen as an active

process of recreation of meaning, then the act of reading rather than the text is the focus of attention, and this process relates happily with the composition process. (The Troubled Connection: Inkshed #6, 1984, p. 5).

Rather than defining literature as something, a canon of texts, I prefer to define literature as a way of reading, one which includes the writer, the text, and the reader. Russell Hunt (1984) approaches literature with this perspective, as does Robert Protherough (1983) who states that stories do things to people, that things happen to people when they read, and any theory about the place of fiction in schools must begin with this premise. Put more concisely,

Literature is any text that offers the possibility for aesthetic reading or viewing and listening. The literariness resides in the transaction between reader and text or reviewer and performance. A literary work comes into being when there is a transaction between text and reader in which personal experience with the work is primary. It provides pleasure and contributes to a shared culture. The literary transaction is both idiosyncratic and social. (Boomer, 1984)

This way of defining literature raises several issues. First, the idea of a transaction between text and reader needs clarification; second, literature is not necessarily restricted to print; third, literature can be approached through other modes than reading; and fourth, the event is both idiosyncratic and social.

### 'Efferent' and 'Aesthetic' Reading

When literature is defined in terms of its instantiation in the readers' mind we can refer to Louise Rosenblatt's distinction between 'efferent' and 'aesthetic' reading. Rosenblatt (1978) shows readers as active, building up a "poem" (her generic term for any literary reading) for themselves through the transaction of their life experiences with the text (the printed symbols on the page). Readers approach a text with expectations, and these expectations direct the reader's attention which in turn determine the meaning generated in the transaction between reader, text, and poem. Expectations are fluid and change as the text is penetrated. The difference between 'aesthetic' (literary) and 'efferent' (nonliterary) texts is primarily one of focus of attention and expectations (p. 23).

In efferent reading our attention is given to what will remain after we read. Efferent reading is reading for information. In aesthetic reading the reader's attention is centred entirely on what he or she is living through during his or her relationship with the particular text. An aesthetic reading is a lived-through experience (pp. 24, 25).

Her emphasis on the reader living through the experience does not minimize the importance of the text. Both are necessary, and together create the "poem". The poles of efferent and aesthetic reading exist on a continuum of possible relationships or stances towards a given text. One text may be experienced in varying degrees of aesthetic or efferent reading by different readers or by the same reader at different times (p. 35). And

a more or less aesthetic reading may shift to an efferent reading "when the reader is more concerned with the information being acquired than with the experienced meaning" (p. 38).

Rosenblatt does not see judgemental or critical response occurring after reading. Rather we judge as we read. A text can be read aesthetically or efferently, at different times, by different readers; a text can be read efferently and aesthetically at different times by the same reader as his or her expectations and focus of attention change or shift.

### Widening the Web of Literature

Literature is not restricted to print material or text in the traditional sense. Alan Purves in his response-centred curriculum described literature as that which arouses a response; "it is a vast assortment of verbal (usually) utterances, each of which comes from some writer, who has a voice; and each of which in itself has some order" (1972, p. 25). Purves therefore includes both scripted and improvised theatre, film, television drama, stories, cartoons, and jokes. Jan Wooley (1982) includes oral narratives, folk songs, playground rhymes, pop songs, comics, novels, film, and television as well as the works traditionally regarded as literature (p. 30). Christine Higgins (1982) broadens this to include texts as various as newspaper and advertising copy, broadcast current affairs discussions, political cartoons, talk-back radio discourse, and magazine articles (p. 131).

Those who broaden the web of literature would argue that since literature is defined by the act of responding, by the transaction between reader/listener, text, and poem, then texts need not be restricted to printed symbols in published form. They might also argue that all literature is derived from speech, or what David Allen refers to as "art-speech" (1980, p. 101). Art-speech includes the novel, poem, play and autobiography (whether created or received, silent or aloud, private or public). "The raw material of art-speech and of English is the personal experience of a human being..." (p.101). Literature is the core of art-speech. The value of art-speech as literature is in recreative reading; art-speech bridges the gap between person and culture.

The concept of art-speech is a powerful one because it extends developmentally our notion of what constitutes literature. Northrop Frye (1963) stated that "no human society is too primitive to have some kind of literature. The only thing is that primitive literature hasn't yet become distinguished from other aspects of life: it's still embedded in religion, magic, and social ceremonies" (p. 13). Michael Taft (1985), a folklorist, argues powerfully for the legacy of folklore to literature.

The oral tradition permeates all literature, and gossip is part of oral literature. David Jackson (1983) believes that although gossip tales sound factually accurate they are more at home in the world of fiction. "Gossip tales come to us as a primary, human necessity, as a way of tailoring down the otherwise bewildering flux of experience to our own personal sizes..." (p. 3).

Viewed from this angle, fiction stops being the stuff we find only in books. In order to live we have to make fictions. It's one effective way of patterning the chaos of experience. And instead of fiction being seen as an exclusively literary thing,...all these arbitrary divisions can merge into the more connected workings of a fiction-making continuum that holds together gossip tales, diary anecdotes and book fiction. The writer is part of the community of tale tellers,... (p.3).

Folklorists, gossipers, storytellers, writers, are all working with and upon the raw materials of human experience. Those involved in creating literature are participants or spectators in the events that constitute literary experience. As readers/viewers of literature they also take a participant or spectator role. D.W. Harding and James Britton have developed the concepts of participant and spectator role in the genesis of and response to literature.

### Participant and Spectator Roles

James Britton (1963, 1970, 1984) suggests that literature is writing in the role of spectator – spectator of other people's lives, of one's own past or future or what might have been. It is writing freed from the participant's need to respond with action or decision; it is writing free to savour the emotions which participants must discharge in action or fret away in anxiety.

Britton believes that we relish the role of spectator of other person's lives, or the mythical lives of fiction, "for the simple reason that we never cease to want more lives than the one we've got; and better lives, more exciting or more successful: and for the further reason that we cannot conceive of pursuing this one and only life in blind ignorance of the lives around us whose many motives may involve us sooner or later..." (1963, pp.42-44).

For Britton what matters is not whether events recounted are true or fictional, but whether we recount them or listen to them as spectators or as participants. Whenever we play the role of spectator of human affairs, we are in the position of literature. As participants we apply our value systems; as spectators we generate and refine the system itself (1984, p. 326). Writing in the spectator role produces a verbal object, a piece of literature, something which the beginning writer can achieve as does the poet, the novelist, the playwright. Such spectator role language, "in its fully developed form - as a fully shaped piece of discourse - becomes the language of literature" (1984, p. 327).

Literature, then, is the shaped verbal object which results from writing in the role of spectator. All writers in the role of spectator are able to produce verbal objects. Does this suggest that children's writing is literature, and as such usable in the English classroom as literature?

### Children's Writing - Literature?

A conception of language in the role of spectator would lead to the

belief that when children's stories and poems, though written for self, re-emerge as experience to be shared and talked over in the classroom, they become the literature of the classroom. Such a conception places pupils' writing as embryonic literature (Allen, 1980, p. 39); it might be considered literature by pupils but would unlikely be considered such by adults, though it is hoped that it would be accepted by adults for what it is - embryonic literature. Britton writes that "gossip and the child's unshaped narrative, autobiographical or fictional, is art-like but not art" (1982, p. 7).

In short, literature has been defined as a transaction or process of response involving the tripartite elements of reader, text, and poem. The text might be a novel, play, poem, piece of children's writing, a television script, radio talk-back program, a film, a political debate. Readers approach a text with expectations which automatically lead to an efferent or aesthetic reading, and this may change with expectations, time, place, or reader.

The verbal object, what is traditionally seen as the text, remains at the centre of literature, though its roots are often in the oral tradition and the spectator role. Thus film is a response to literature on the part of the director; a dramatic performance of a scripted play is a response to literature. Children's writing is embryonic literature in the spectator role. All are literature in the conceptualization that shifts the focus from what literature is to what literature does, which looks at the process of readers (and listeners and viewers) reading texts and responding to them.



Literature is centrally concerned with exploring and defining the value and meaning of human experience. The uniqueness of literature lies in the way it does this, through the imaginative recreation and shaping of experience in language. This definition includes oral literature, drama and film, and it links children's imaginative writings with the work of published authors in that it sees them as animated by a single impulse.

(Education Department of South  
Australia, 1983)

#### TYPES OF LITERATURE

It seems clear from the rationale for the study of literature discussed earlier, and from the curriculum guidelines studied, that students should be exposed to a wide range of literary texts - their own, those of other cultures and those of other times. As young persons reach out from their own worlds to the wider world that surrounds them, they must have the opportunity to study an ever-widening range of literature.

Although students can learn that the concerns expressed in the literature of one's own region, province or country are a microcosm of the universal concerns of mankind, there is a need to gradually present the macrocosm through literature. The literature program of the final high school years should be a dialectic between the familiar and the strange or foreign.

One method of encompassing a range of types of literature is to consider points of view in relation to types. In Figure 1 which follows, the squares in which there is no check indicates a form of literature that is not traditionally written from that point of view. (Figure 1 and the ensuing discussion is borrowed and adapted from Moffett & Wagner, 1983).

FIGURE 1

## Forms of Literature as Points of View

	Folk Tales	Fables and Parables	Myths	Legends	Nar- rative Poetry	Fan- tasy	Real- istic Fiction
THIRD PERSON Fictional Chronicle (they)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fictional Bio- graphy(he or sl.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
FIRST PERSON Fictional Mem- oir					*	*	*
Fictional Auto- biography					*	*	*
Fictional Diaries					*	*	*
Fictional Letters					*	*	*

(Moffett & Wagner, 1983, p. 278)

Fictional chronicle literature has no central character but focuses on a group. Fictional chronicles are relatively impersonal and emphasize

communal experience. A great many myths, legends, science fiction novels, realistic novels and fantasy are written from the third person point of view. Fictional biographies are third-person invented stories with one central protagonist. Most modern short stories and novels are written from a single viewpoint and in third person.

Fictional memoir, written from first person point of view, often tends to be a privileged firsthand view of a person or group but still seen from the outside. This type of literature has a narrator close enough to the people and events to be an onlooker, confidant, or perhaps occasional participant. Fictional autobiography usually features an older person, and is often about problems of growing up. This makes it easy for adolescents to identify with. It also naturally provides a double perspective on this youthful experience -- that of the narrator as a participant at the time of the events and as an author recalling those events after much intervening experience. Fictional diaries magnify ongoing detail and feeling. This is an advantage for inexperienced storytellers. Diary accounts stimulate identification with historical figures. Fictional letters offer students an opportunity to let a monologist reveal herself or himself (pp.277-306).

The columns in Figure 1 present genres. Folk tales speak to the child in everyone. They symbolize deep feeling and serious thought in fantastic figures and events, and readers may find in them a fusion of the imagination and intellect. Both fables and parables are highly pointed narratives in prose or poetry. Fables and parables encourage readers to infer a generality and to interpret symbolically. The difference between a fable and a parable is that a fable always has an explicitly stated moral

at the end whereas a parable is a story that teaches but stops just short of stating its thought explicitly.

Myth is the literature that declares culture's core beliefs and values. This literature is an important key to understanding how a people explains itself and its world: it is this explanatory power that makes myths fascinating for young readers who are also in the process of explaining many forces, phenomena, and relationships in their experience. Whereas myth is primal religion and science, legend is idealized history. Legend speaks to the need for heroes and heroines in the world, people who by their deeds transcend our everyday human condition. Seeking heroes is also part of a search for positive models to imitate.

Narrative poetry, including ballads, pose models for student storytelling. Fictional biography or chronicle or autobiography or memoir - all can be cast as poetry. Like ballads, narrative poems lend themselves well to performance. Fantasy, like folk literature, presents a world where magic abounds, where logic is upended and things are not as they seem. Many of the classics in children's literature are fantasy. Works of fantasy are the products of creative minds in that fantasy writers take apart the familiar world and reassemble it in startling ways that show relations and implications that are often unique. Finally, realistic fiction includes stories and novels that are set in a world governed by the same laws of time and space, and the same logic of cause and effect, that we find in the everyday world. This is a popular genre with children, adolescents, and adults. "Good fiction has a sense of reality, at least one fully rounded character for the reader to identify with, and an

inventive plot" (p.296).

The types of literature displayed in Figure 1, along with the organization of types and point of view, presents a useful means of incorporating a varied and wide range of fictional literature in a literature program. Other means of organization are possible, and provincial curriculum guides sometimes offer ways of incorporating many types of literature into English programs.

#### Frequently Listed Literature Titles

Teachers of English, especially when organizing their own literature programs, might be interested in knowing the types of literature most frequently listed in Canadian English/Language Arts curricula. Table 1 presents that information reported in 1980. Table 2 provides information about the most frequently listed Canadian literature in Canadian English/Language Arts curricula, reported in 1980. (The source of both tables is unknown).

TABLE 1

Most Frequently Listed Literature Titles as Available from or Recommended by Provincial Departments of Education in Canada (1980)

Title	Author	Nationality of Author	No. of Provinces Listed
To Kill a Mockingbird	Lee, H.	American	8
The Pearl	Steinbeck, J.	American	8
Lord of the Flies	Golding, W.	British	8
Who Has Seen the Wind?	Mitchell, W.O.	Canadian	7
The Old Man and the Sea	Hemingway, E.	American	7
The Crayfish	Wyndham, J.	British	7
Animal Farm	Orwell, G.	British	7
The Red Pony	Steinbeck, J.	American	6
Pigman	Zindel, P.	American	6
Great Expectations	Dickens, C.	British	6
A Separate Peace	Knowles, J.	American	6
Lost Horizon	Hilton, J.	British	6
Lost in the Barrens	Mowat, F.	Canadian	6
The Incredible Journey	Burnford, S.	Canadian	6
The Mountain and the Valley	Buckler, E.	Canadian	5
In the Heat of the Night	Bull, J.	American	5
Shane	Schaefer, J.	American	5
Cry, The Beloved Country	Paton, A.	South African	5
Moonfleet	Faulkner	British	5
The Grizzly	Johnson, A.&E.	American	5
Kon-Tiki Expedition	Hyerdahl, T.	Swedish	5
Never Cry Wolf	Mowat, F.	Canadian	5
The Outsiders	Hinton, S.E.	American	5
Anne Frank	Frank, A.	Dutch	5

TABLE 2

## Canadian Authored Novels most Frequently Listed for Use by Provinces (1980)

Title	Author	No. of Provinces Listed
Who Has Seen the Wind?	Mitchell, W.O.	7
Lost in the Barrens	Mowat, F.	6
The Mountain and the Valley	Buckler, E.	5
The Incredible Journey	Burnford, S.	5
Never Cry Wolf	Mowat, F.	5
Where Nests the Water Hen?	Roy, G.	4
The Stone Angel	Laurence, M.	4
More Joy in Heaven	Callaghan, M.	4
Execution	McDougall, C.	4
Each Man's Son	MacLennan, H.	4
Barometer Rising	MacLennan, H.	4
People of the Deer	Mowat, F.	4
The Watch that Ends the Night	MacLennan, H.	3
Death on the Ice	Brown	3
Boss of the Namko Drive	St.Pierre, P.	3
Leaven of Malice	Davies, R.	3
Fifth Business	Davies, R.	3
Two Solitudes	MacLennan, H.	3
The Richman	Kreisel, H.	2
The Loved and the Lost	Callaghan, M.	2
Earth and High Heaven	Graham, G.	2
A Jest of God	Laurence, M.	2
Swamp Angel	Wilson, C.	2
The Sacrifice	Wiseman, A.	2
The White Eskimo	Horwood, H.	2
Such is My Beloved	Callaghan, M.	2

QUALITY OF LITERATURE

The question of quality of literature is as thorny a one as that of defining literature. To define quality literature would be to create a literary canon for a particular purpose at a particular level of readership for a particular audience. Even within these narrow strictures there would be much controversy, and English teachers would be hard-pressed to agree on a definition, let alone a canon of literature.

If we retain the broad concept of literature as described earlier there can be a quite different approach taken to the issue of quality of literature. Literature is that which evokes an aesthetic or literary reading. The transaction that takes place between reader, text and poem is the important element in the experience of literature. Therefore one of the marks of quality literature for students is that the literary experience leaves them sufficient latitude

to remake the book as they read it, bringing to it their own experiences of life and of other books, giving characters and incidents a concrete form, filling in what is implied rather than stated, speculating and questioning, judging and sympathizing. Trivial, undemanding books spell out everything; they leave nothing for the reader to do; stock formula stories eliminate all sense of the unexpected. (Protherough, 1983, pp. 28-29).

For the above reasons we rarely find filmed versions of literature fully satisfactory: they eliminate the imaginative opportunity for us to



construct and mentally visualize characters and incidents for ourselves.

Provincial English curricula, particularly at the middle school and high school levels, will probably always provide a canon of literature, organized in a variety of ways. The titles might be chosen because they fit a cultural heritage model, a personal growth model (less likely) , or because they are prerequisite readings for an academic study of literature at tertiary levels. It is hoped that curriculum canons will continue and expand to include more contemporary and world literature, and that there will be less prescription and greater provision for teacher choice of titles, with greater provision for supplemental selection by teachers.

Rosenblatt (1976) warns that a stilted academic approach to good literature in schools may contribute to students' feeling that they can get little personal enjoyment from it, with the reaction of turning to a type of writing about which there hangs no academic aura (p. 210). The "more varied the literary fare provided for students, the greater its potential as an educationally liberating force" (p. 214).

Particularly in secondary school students should be free to select books of their own choice or from those offered them. These choices may not all satisfy the teachers' ideas of 'good' literature, but the responses that young people make to the books they choose form the basis of a developing sense of literary judgement and the basis for the more mature responses we expect of them later. The teacher's task is to bring the student and the book together and then he or she can suggest, encourage, and guide the student in his or her choice, and subsequent choices.

Hook & Evans (1982) describe a teacher who, along with her class, devised a checklist to differentiate a serious from a superficial book. Among the points were:

The serious book presents a universal truth about life, but the purpose of the superficial book is to make the reader's dreams come true. In a serious book, personality changes are slow and often painful, but in a superficial book they are quick and easy. (p. 154)

#### SELECTION OF LITERATURE

The discussion up to this point has led to the idea that selection of literature is best left up to the individual teacher and his or her students, particularly at secondary levels. At elementary levels the teacher should assume the primary, though not exclusive, responsibility of selection. Such a responsibility places a heavy burden on an English/Language Arts teacher, because more than ever before that person will need to have a broad knowledge of types of literature, as well as developmental aspects of children's understanding of and response to literature.

Selection of literature introduces two related issues - the place of the "classics" in school English curricula, and censorship. The process of selection itself suggests that certain works are selected and others not. The basis for selection might be a canon of literature, notions of what constitutes quality or good literature, or simply familiarity with

particular works. I suggest that selection be based on the needs, abilities, maturation, and developmental levels of students, given a commonsense knowledge and understanding of provincial English/Language Arts curricula, and the community from which the students come.

English teachers are better qualified than most other educators or persons to choose and recommend books for their classes. However, English teachers must also be prepared to defend their choices. But teachers are caught between two fundamentally different points of view. There are those on the one hand for whom the teacher's role is to present and make attractive "good literature", selecting, condensing, diluting, or adapting it in whatever ways are necessary to make it acceptable to pupils. On the other hand there are those who see the teacher's task as that of guiding pupils' reading in such a way that their immature likes and dislikes are gradually changed for the better (Squire, 1968, pp. 63-64). The position adapted by the teacher will be reflected in his or her selection of literature.

#### The Teacher's Role

In 1982 the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published the pamphlet The Students' Right to Read. Teachers are given a definite role in the selection process, and the importance of that role is clear.

In selecting books for reading by young people, English teachers consider the contribution which each work may make to the education of the reader,

its aesthetic value, its honesty, its readability for a particular group of students, and its appeal to adolescents. English teachers, however, may use different works for different purposes. The criteria for choosing a work to be read by an entire class are somewhat different from the criteria for choosing works to be read by small groups. (pp. 5-6)

Likewise, the criteria for suggesting books to individuals or for recommending something worth reading for a student are different from criteria for selecting material for a class or group. The teacher's task is to select, not censor, books.

Selection implies that a teacher is free to choose this or that work, depending upon the purpose to be achieved and the student or class in question, but a book selected this year may be ignored next year, and the reverse. Censorship implies that certain works are not open to selection, this year or any year. (p. 6)

This selection role for the English/Language Arts teacher implies an understanding of adolescent needs and conflicts, and a recognition of any circumstances in their personal and social backgrounds that would make certain books of the past or present particularly interesting and illuminating. In short, it implies a knowledge not only of literature but

of students. Books must be provided that present some link with the students' past and present preoccupations, anxieties, ambitions. Ultimately students should learn to select their own books (Rosenblatt, 1976, pp. 72,73).

The NCTE in The Students Right to Read (1982) suggests that in each school the English department develop its own statement explaining why literature is taught and how books are chosen for each class. Further, each English teacher is required to give a rationale for any book to be read by an entire class. Each rationale should include answers to these questions:

1. For what classes is this book especially appropriate?
2. To what particular objectives, literary or psychological or pedagogical, does this book lend itself?
3. In what ways will the book be used to meet those objectives?
4. What problems of style, tone, or theme are possible grounds for censorship?
5. How does (do) the teacher (I) plan to meet those problems?
6. Assuming that the objectives are met, how might students be different because of their reading of this book?
7. What are some other appropriate books an individual student might need in place of this book?
8. What reputable sources have recommended this book? What have critics said about it?

(Shugert, 1979, p. 188)

Education endeavours to improve the quality of choices open to all students. To deny the freedom of choice in fear that it might be unwisely used is to destroy the freedom itself. For this reason teachers must respect the right of individuals to be selective in their own reading. It is a right of students also to be exposed to a balanced view of reality. The English classroom should be an open forum of ideas through literature.

Teachers must always remain free to enquire, to study and to evaluate. The roles and functions of English/Language Arts teachers cannot be restricted, impaired or restrained by prior normative prohibitions based on moral and social values of any individual or group. But how far does a teacher go in selecting literature which presents controversial issues?

Literature presents fear. The distinction between the fear that is potentially beneficial and that which is possibly damaging or corrupting is difficult to establish. In general it seems unrealistic as well as misguided to try to protect children from everything that might frighten them. Learning to cope with fear and pity is an essential part of preparation for adult life.

To what extent should children be allowed to read of wrong, violence, wickedness, evil? Does it help them, either by showing them how undesirable such behavior is, or by allowing them to sublimate the urge towards violent or anti-social acts by engaging them in fantasy (Protherough, 1983, p. 160)? A directly didactic view, that lessons may be learned and values absorbed through stories, is common among the authors of moralistic tales. Literature does not preach ready-made truths; rather it

provides an opportunity for readers to find or forge truth for themselves.

A reader's personality strongly influences his or her response to reading. Because personality tends to remain relatively stable, the influence of personality on response may be stronger than any short-term changes in personality resulting from reading certain books. This fact justifies reading books with characters whose values differ considerably from community norms. Because adolescent readers do identify or empathize with such characters, they perceive themselves from a different perspective and a different set of values. For adolescents, many of whom are highly egocentric, the experience of assuming the perspectives of others, particularly perspectives that are radically different from their own, helps to break them out of their egocentricity (Beach, 1979, p. 137).

Literature presents sex. But whether sex in literature changes student's sexual behavior or activity is highly questionable. Research suggests the opposite: lack of normal, healthy sex experience during adolescence involving some experience with sex in literature leads to later sexual deviancy or delinquency. Sex in literature may therefore contribute, among other things, to healthy sexual development. Erotica also provides adolescents with vicarious substitute for actual sexual behaviors, the so-called 'safety-valve theory' (Beach, 1979, pp. 150-151).

Cy Groves (1971) gives voice to misunderstandings that often arise over what really happens in a classroom when an English teacher helps students to work through a piece of literature. These are helpful points which English/Language Arts teachers must keep in mind when selecting books

and defending those selections.

1. The use of "rough language" in a book presupposes that the teacher and students use such language and condone its use.  
Language in literature belongs to the character using the language; in fact, the author cannot even be held responsible for the language used by a fictional character. Every word a student reads does not automatically become the student's property.
  
2. The English/language arts classroom is a sanctuary or sheltered environment apart from the actual world.  
Through a wide and varied selection process students will develop a process of discrimination which will involve some measure of judgement and taste. But students must do their own thinking, and arrive at their own judgments.
  
3. There is a misunderstanding that literature is a mirror of all life. If English/Language Arts teachers restricted all literary selections in the classroom to those which reflected the "good life" it would be a narrow and restrictive list indeed. Literature has always presented life over the widest spectrum.

It is surely more important to choose books that positively have qualities that will provide for development (emotional, moral, conceptual) rather than those which simply lack objectionable features. Our judgments as teachers are always likely to be called into question, because one of the marks of true literature is that it is frequently subversive: it



undermines our accepted ideas. Protherough (1983, pp. 167-168) lists some questions which a teacher might consider when contemplating the use of a particular novel with a class:

### 1. The Teacher's Overall View of the Purposes of Reading Fiction

- (i) Why do I want to read this book with them?
- (ii) What do I hope that the reading may achieve?
- (iii) What range of personal responses do I anticipate?

### 2. Literary Judgements

- (i) What are the chief merits of this work that I hope students will discover for themselves, and how can I help them to this discovery without telling them directly?
- (ii) How important are the difficulties it presents, and how can these best be dealt with?
- (iii) Is the quality of the writing good enough to extend the pupils without being too demanding?
- (iv) Is there any information which members of the group must have if they are to appreciate the book and, if so, how can it best be conveyed?
- (v) How vivid/original/dull/cliche-ridden are the situations/characters/dialogue/relationships?
- (vi) How can pupils' developing response to the text be assessed?

### 3. Awareness of Children's Tastes

- (i) What is it about this book that is most likely to make it popular?
- (ii) How can this book best be related to what I know they enjoy?
- (iii) What mode of presentation is likely to increase their enjoyment?
- (iv) How far will it appeal to both boys and girls and to different levels of ability?
- (v) Does it display the qualities that generally seem appealing (e.g. a character with whom they can associate, a plot which created anticipation, vivid physical detail) and is there variety of appeal?

### 4. Curricular Principles

- (i) How far is it necessary to 'teach' this book, rather than just letting the children read it themselves?
- (ii) In what different ways might I teach it, and which seems most likely to be successful with this group?
- (iii) In what ways will it lead naturally into other activities without distortion?
- (iv) In what ways does it relate to the total English programme?
- (v) How far will it fit into a developmental reading programme, enabling helpful comparisons to be made with other texts, and

aiding literary learning?

## 5. Matching the Book and the Children

- (i) Why do I propose to use this book with this particular group at this time?
- (ii) What problems of language, concept, narrative technique, allusion may interfere with children's enjoyment, and how should I overcome these?
- (iii) How effectively will it speak to their basic hopes and fears?
- (iv) In what ways may it help them to understand themselves, their dilemmas and choices better?
- (v) How far is it likely to aid their appreciation of the humanity of people of other ages, sexes, races, backgrounds?
- (vi) Does it offer vicarious experiences of aggression, danger, fear, or suffering in a controlled way that they can contemplate?
- (vii) Will any aspects of the book need particularly careful handling or preliminary 'de-fusing'?
- (viii) How would I justify my choice of this book in the face of criticisms (from a principal or parent, say)?
- (ix) Are there any individuals in the class for whom this book may prove upsetting, and how might I deal with this?

### Students' Self-Selection

The hope of any English teacher might be that students assume responsibility at some point during the secondary school years for selection of the literature they read. Certainly a lifelong love for and experience with self-determined quality literature should be our goal for students. It is chiefly fiction that impels children to read, to learn and to continue reading in later life. Adult illiterates are characterized by the fact that they had never developed any sense of pleasure to be gained from reading stories.

Protherough (1983, pp. 19-20) reports a study which shows that narrative, primarily fiction, accounts for the great majority of children's book reading in the age range 10 to 14. Non-narrative only accounts for

one-seventh of the freely-chosen reading of the boys and girls surveyed. All the writers named by a large number of children as their favorite authors at age 10,12, and 14 were novelists.

Next to age, sex is the most important determinant of differences in reading interests. Females differ from males in preferring romance, home life, and drama while males prefer sports, war, and science. These differences may shift as cultural values and the content of available books change. However, there seems to be less influence of sex-role values on responses (Beach, 1979, p. 138).

Using readability formulas to match reading to students' age levels is of dubious value; most of the standard measures of readability reveal a serious misunderstanding of the nature of fiction reading. Readability measures tend to ignore such qualities as vividness, inherent interest, organization, style, and qualities of content. Also, books designated as high interest and low reading level have to be judged by their success as narrative fiction, and not just by the controlled level of the lexicon and syntax (Protherough, 1983, pp. 155,157).

#### Developing a Selection Policy

The Canadian Library Association and the National Council of Teachers of English advise school districts and/or individual schools to establish selection policies which cover print and nonprint texts and learning materials. Schools and school districts with written policies explaining the procedures and criteria for selection are more successful in

resolving censorship problems than schools and school districts without such policies.

A selection policy should include procedures for handling challenged materials. Selection procedures for discarding out-of-date materials, accepting gifts, handling multiple sets, and selecting controversial materials should be stated. A selection policy should also include a statement outlining the philosophy of the school districts' objectives, and who is responsible for selection. The document should also indicate where final authority for selection resides.

The Canadian Library Association advises the use of a school-board approved selection policy developed by the Vancouver School District #39. It contains a statement of goals, with procedures for handling challenged materials, the latter to be dealt with later in the Censorship chapter. Any selection policy should have guidelines for dealing with such issues as bias involving race, religion, sex, age, and physical and mental capacities.

Persons evaluating instructional materials are expected to be particularly sensitive to the appropriateness of materials to the level of student maturity, with specific reference to excessive violence and improprieties of language, subject and situation. At the same time, it is recognized that often it is desirable to expose students to controversial issues and opinions to enable them to draw intelligent conclusions. However, it is expected that these controversial issues and opinions are presented in materials that:

- present alternative points of view
- indicate the purpose for presenting these issues and
- are suitable to the age and maturity of students' opinions
- reflect community standards but not to the exclusion of provincial, national and international values.

### The Place of the Classics

The "classics" belong in any selection of literature for use in the classroom, but what constitutes "the classics" of literature is the problem. Needless to say those involved in English/language arts instruction and/or research at different levels are going to have different concepts of what constitutes that canon of literature deemed "the classics". Also, persons from different national or ethnic backgrounds are going to have quite different concepts of what constitutes classics of literature. Is a classical canon an international, national, ethnic, geographic, or linguistic collection of works?

Given the broad definition of literature preferred the above questions are largely irrelevant. The question does not become "does one teach Shakespeare", but rather at what developmental response level are students ready to be formally introduced to Shakespeare as literature. Much literature can be introduced to students through other media well in advance of their being ready to respond to it as written literature.

This problem of congruence between classical literature and students' developmental response levels is recognized by Purves (1972) who believes that often the classical work is "too old" for a great number of

students (p. 53). It is not uncommon for English curricula in Canada to require formal study of Shakespeare at the grade nine level, an example of the "too old" criticism. Purves also states that often the second-rate work of a major writer is used in schools because the first-rate is considered "too old" for students. Consequently the inclusion of the classics cause a bad reaction. Students tend to brand classics as "irrelevant" because they are not able to see that there is much generalizability from the classic to their lives. Teachers also tend to worship a classic and expect students to pay homage to it as do they (p.53).

Rosenblatt (1976) cautions against unwise use of classics as works valued because they offer approved models of conduct which young people are expected to admire, or imitate (p. 214). Echoing Purves she admonishes that "too often,..., the classics are introduced to children at an age when it is impossible for them to feel in any personal way the problems of conflicts treated" (p. 216). This false wisdom derives from the thinking that classics survive a winnowing process that establishes them as repositories of the accumulated wisdom of the race. Obviously much good contemporary literature fulfills the same criterion, and meets the relevancy test also!

The problem exists not in the classics themselves, nor with the characteristics and expectations of today's students, but with the way in which literature has been, and still is, presented. When the focus is on the text and not the response process, then the text faces either acceptance or tacit rejection by students. Geoffrey Summerfield (1982)

describes the process of dealing with classics for which students are not ready. "... in order to ensure that they get anything at all, in order that the task may be not totally futile, we engage in translation in order to give them some kind of meaning, some illusion, some travesty of (Shakespeare's) meanings. And of course they can't explicitly refuse; they refuse implicitly" (p. 64). The fact that there are extensively annotated editions of the classics implies that they are designed for use with students who are not ready, and who need translations just to be able to read the text, let alone respond.

Literature programs have tended to consistently ignore the individual experiences and interests that students bring to their reading. Instead, teachers have concentrated most of their attention on what amounts to a specialist's interest in literature as an academic discipline. The fact that courses are structured around historical periods ensures a dominant place for the classics (Judy, 1981, p. 142).

Hook and Evans (1982) argue for a place for the classics in an English program. I am of the opinion that if the word "classic" could be dropped from the vocabulary of English education the issue would dissolve. All works of all periods and sources could then be viewed equally and judged as literature. Each generation needs to make its own value judgements anew.

The classics should be taught as samples of the best thinking and writing that humanity has yet achieved, and as expression of the sensitivity of

unusually perceptive human beings. Those children who are intellectually able to realize the mental and emotional penetration of great writers will have as a permanent possession the desire to find in other literature that which is no less evocative. (Hook & Evans, 1982, p. 131)

### LITERATURE AND VALUES

Literature and values are inseparable, but we must avoid the danger of accusing literature of teaching values, good or bad. Values exist in the reader; dilemmas, decisions, and actions involving values and morals are often dealt with in literature, but they are dealt with through a fictional persona who is not the reader (or writer). The values, morals, and attitudes in texts must be kept apart from the values, morals and attitudes brought to the reading of a text by the reader.

Louise Rosenblatt (1976) writes that the teaching of literature inevitably involves the conscious or unconscious reinforcement of ethical attitudes. It is practically impossible to treat any novel or drama (any literary work of art) "in a vital manner without confronting some problem of ethics and without speaking out of some social philosophy. A framework of values is essential to any discussion of human life" (pp. 16-17). Rosenblatt defends the reading of contemporary literature because in such literature the issue of choices in values often imposes itself.

Young people gain inner strength when they are faced with values



through literature. The experience they gain through literature helps them to assume responsibility for making their own judgements and working out their own solutions. James Squire (1968) believes that "the curriculum should be open to a great variety of values and visions, including those that rub against the grain of society, that counter prevailing values" (p. 30).

At the heart of the censorship issue lies the fact that many persons believe that a work of literature embodies values in the broadest sense of the term, and that appraisal of a work of literature becomes confused between its appraisal as literature and appraisal of the moral values it embodies. Ken Watson (1981) argues that much more work "remains to be done before we can speak positively of the power of literature to shape values and attitudes, and perhaps it is naive to expect literature to have...a directly discernible influence on the principles by which people live" (p. 51).

Don Gutteridge (1983) makes a useful distinction between literature and values. He writes that "fiction is about things and our response to things; it is not about morals per se; it presents a view of life for our response, and when that response involves a choice or a decision, then the reader's moral sensibility is aroused" (p. 43). Good fiction insists that readers respond.

The direction of classroom discussion of literature should be towards personal reflection on issues or choice in values so that students generate the drive to act on their understandings of what is of value

(worthy) and desirable. This means an enhanced awareness of where they stand on value questions, and where there are tensions or discordances between their values and the values of others.

The questions of whose values are being considered in classrooms and in whose interests is a matter of vital concern. Garth Boomer (1984) believes that teachers cannot and should not avoid the presentation of their own values. However, there must be open revelation and discussion by teachers of their own values in such a way that they are subject to critique and are not imposed. "The question of values and indoctrination is complicated by the fact that classroom acts take place in institutions which carry value systems which are often militant against the values of individuals and groups of students" (p. 9).

## CENSORSHIP

I don't see how the study of language and literature can be separated from the question of free speech, which we all know is fundamental to our society.

Northrop Frye

Censorship is the other side of the selection coin. Obviously English/Language Arts teachers must select from the innumerable possibilities of literature texts. The titles not chosen constitute a possible body of censored material. But censorship is usually a more deliberate, even public, exercise. And members of the public exercise censorship more so than do English/Language Arts teachers or other educators.

The selection issue is definitely in the public forum now, and English/Language Arts teachers must attend carefully to what selections they use in their classrooms, and why. The temptation exists omnipresently for English teachers to either subvert their own beliefs about what constitutes literature, or else to practise self-censorship through selecting out reading matter they feel is potentially inflammatory. Either decision is wrong. In this section I deal with ways of facing the censorship issue rather than ways of deflecting it.

The section begins with a censorship case that evolved publicly in New Brunswick. This case, though possibly more sensational because of the

extensive media coverage, is nonetheless similar to many others reported in Canada and the United States. This situation could occur in any city in Canada.

#### CASE IN POINT

The incident began in the spring of 1978 when Earle Wood, Superintendent of School District Number 20 (greater Saint John, New Brunswick) was driving to his office. On the car radio Pastor Gerald Morgan of Calvary Temple, a Pentecostal church, was being interviewed about his complaints of obscenity and blasphemy in the school curriculum. To press his point, Pastor Morgan quoted a short passage from Go Ask Alice.

When Earle Wood arrived at his office callers were already phoning. He made it clear that Go Ask Alice was not a school text but was in school libraries. Wood explained that no book could be judged by quotations taken out of context.

In January of 1978 Pastor Morgan and Edward Pickett, an ordained Anglican priest and principal of a small rural high school in New Brunswick, had formed Citizens for Truth and Decency. Morgan was able to fan the flames of censorship through his very popular Sunday afternoon religious television broadcast. More media exposure was gained through a Sunday evening phone-in radio talk show.

In March 1978 Morgan and Pickett took their concerns, and copies of offending books, to the Saint John Ministerial Association. This

association provided the pretext of an ecumenical basis for denouncing obscenities and blasphemies and demanding that books containing such be removed from the curriculum. A meeting was secured with Premier Richard Hatfield who agreed the language was objectionable but it was not possible to legislate righteousness. The Ministerial Association then went public in the spring through television, radio, newspapers, daily radio talk shows, and public meetings.

The impetus was a document circulated by Morgan and Pickett entitled "Petition for Better Schools", subtitled "An expose of pornographic, obscene, profane, and sexually exploitive language from school curriculum textbooks." Ironically, of nine books quoted only three were on any study lists, and they were optional reading. This "filthy, degrading, hellish garbage", the petition warned, is reaching the point where Canada, "the land of Christian homes and ethics is all a thing of the past if we continue to allow our impressionable children to be inoculated with this calculated poison for just a few more years ... our forefathers crossed oceans and braved untold perils to get away from the very thing that is being pushed on our society now."

Earle Wood responded to the media furore in his address to the school board in May in part by stating that only three books named in the petition were among the more than 3,200 titles on the provincial curriculum list. "The public has been seriously misinformed about the use of curriculum school books", he continued.

In June the Ministerial Association held long public meetings to

discuss "the quality of material presented to our children in schools today. Some 1300 people attended, and the events made national television news. However, with national media coverage came opposition from within the community. A Presbyterian minister in Saint John, on Gerald Morgan's admission that he had only synopsisized the offending books, stated that "for the leader of a censorship movement to give these books anything but a thorough reading is irresponsible and inexcusable". The minister then defended two of the three books.

When the provincial school board association met the then Minister of Education he told the meeting that the curriculum is chosen by the provincial committee but "it is the responsibility of parents to supervise the reading material their children have in school, not that of the education system".

In July the Ministerial Association met again with Premier Hatfield. Both he and the Minister of Education stood firm; the books were optional reading. They promised a meeting with the Curriculum Committee and gave the assurance that no student would be forced to read anything contrary to his or her spiritual beliefs or morals, or those of his or her parents.

A third and final public rally was held in August. Thousands of virtually form letters flooded the Department of Education written by people who described themselves as concerned individuals. Before schools opened in September a memorandum went to all school boards in the province providing guidelines for curriculum selection.

It reads: "Cultural and education traditions in the province require flexible attitudes, sensitive, and responsive to many different beliefs and opinions ... . Awareness of individual value systems is an important factor in the selection of reading materials. Under no circumstances should students be required to read a book which gives them or their parents offense".

The Saint John case underlines the need for all school jurisdictions to develop and implement a selections policy, and a challenged materials policy. These two procedures are the best ways of preparing for any possible censorship attempts in schools.

#### WHAT IS CENSORSHIP?

Any work is potentially open to attack by someone. By its very nature the learning process exposes students in public schools, and high schools in particular, to widely divergent commentaries on values, customs, laws and beliefs. Educators must accept a diversity of views in the classroom.

However, citizens and parents have a legal and moral right to object to school learning materials of which they disapprove, and to organize to make their concerns known. The central censorship issue concerns who should decide what books will or will not be used in the English classrooms (and libraries) of public schools. Selection policies, already discussed in this monograph invest this decision with school districts and boards.

Any selection policy should remind the public that the sole purpose of the school is not merely to reflect contemporary local community standards. Part of an English teacher's function is to help make students more sensitive to the vast world of creative ideas and conflicting viewpoints that lie both within and without their immediate experience and environment. Discrimination in the selection of learning materials does not automatically exclude all controversial books.

Educators and the public need also to be made aware that censorship does not guard moral standards, nor does it protect students from degradation and the sordid. Censorship leaves students with an inadequate and distorted picture of the ideals, values, and problems of their culture. Partly because of censorship, or the fear of censorship, many writers are ignored or inadequately represented in English courses, and many are represented not by their best work but by their safest or least offensive work. This aspect of selection is self-censorship, and is practised quite widely and unannounced.

Yet there is a place for a reasoned and articulated selection policy in all schools. Glatthorn (1977) believes that society can tolerate almost absolute freedom as to what is published for private consumption by mature adults. "But I become more and more convinced that a required book studied by all students in the English classroom must meet very different criteria. We make a grave mistake if today's best-seller list becomes tomorrow's exclusive required reading" (p. 14).

A censorship case begins with an individual or group challenging a



book or other learning material, charging that the item is not suitable for use in the classroom or school. The ultimate aim of a would-be censor is usually to have the item removed from the student, classroom, or school.

Dick (1982) cites a Canadian survey which revealed that books with sexual themes are most likely to arouse parental objections. It seems that it is the subject matter rather than its treatment which causes concern: explicit illustrations and provocative titles are considered to be prime targets.

Frequently, school books are challenged because their language is considered profane. Conflicts over language may stem from basic differences between fundamentalist Christianity and modern liberalism. Books presenting unpopular political views come under attack. Writings which do not support the status quo, which present a viewpoint seen as "socialist" or "communist" may be perceived as being "seditious". Material which is heretical in the Judeo-Christian context may be objected to. Books dealing with violence may be opposed.

Content which is viewed as racist also receives complaints. Poor representation or under-representation of ethnic groups, visible minorities, women, immigrants, and socioeconomic levels are the most frequently mentioned complaints made about textbooks. Sexism is found offensive, though it is not usually perceived to be as objectionable as racism in library books. Improving the Image of Women in Textbooks (Scott, Foresman, 1974) gives the following definition of sexist textbooks:

Textbooks are sexist if they omit the actions and

achievements of women, if they demean women by using patronizing language, or if they show women or men only in stereotyped roles with less than the full range of human interests, traits, and capabilities. The actual role of sexism in society, past and present, should not be ignored; and, where appropriate, textbooks can discuss sexism as an important phenomenon without reflecting or reinforcing sexist bias.

Books dealing with the use of drugs, mental retardation, and politically touchy topics receive close scrutiny. For example, the relationship between English and French Canada is a nationally-sensitive issue that is often self-censored from school curricula.

Most complaints reflect deep-rooted opinions, feelings or ideas on the purpose of education and the values it should promote. All persons, educators included, hold opinions and harbour feelings about what constitutes "good" or appropriate literature. Parents and other concerned individuals are the most frequent challengers. Pressure groups are the next most frequent censors. Renaissance International, a fundamentalist Christian organization, is active across Canada and comes up frequently in reports of school book controversies.

Teachers, librarians, and administrations are another group of censors. One result of criticism and pressure from outside the school may be that educators are beginning to avoid books that are potentially controversial even when they feel that such books fulfil educational

purposes. This underground activity represents self-censorship. At times the titles avoided by educators have been approved by provincial departments of education.

#### WHAT HAPPENS TO CHALLENGED MATERIALS?

One response to the problem of isolated challenges is to remove only the offensive parts of the book in question. For example, a story might be removed from an anthology of short stories, sometimes by physically tearing out the pages. A second response is to restrict usage. For example, in Langley, B.C., the book Go Ask Alice was taken off library shelves and placed in counsellors' offices to be used at their discretion.

Books may also be removed from the curriculum. A title may be dropped from the provincial department of education approved reading list, or permission to use the book may be withdrawn by the school board, superintendent, or director, or principal. The book may, however, be allowed to remain in the school library. Banning occurs when a book is removed both from the library and the curriculum.

Finally, full access to a challenged book might be retained. In fact, most challenged books that go through a challenge process are retained as fully accessible, though individual students' parents can request that their son(s) and/or daughter(s) be exempted from using (a) particular book(s). It appears that "some educators and school administrators are less likely to remove materials or censor them than they were before censorship became a public issue" (Dick, 1982, p. 54).

Research conducted in the United States adds a little more information of potential interest to Canadian English/Language Arts teachers. Burress (1979) reports on the 1977 NCTE Censorship Survey based on 630 returned questionnaires for a response rate of slightly over 30 percent of the 2000 secondary English teachers surveyed. The most common objection was to the language of the books - the grammar or dialect, profanity, or so-called obscenity. It appears that to many objectionable grammar has a moral connotation: bad grammar is equivalent to bad morals.

Next in frequency to objections to language were objections to sex, or erotic qualities in books. There was a highly significant relationship between school size and the evidence of censorship. The larger the school the more likelihood of censorship. Although few titles received much attention, the main objects of attack were contemporary books that examine the problems of society realistically (realistic fiction).

#### CENSORSHIP, LITERARY QUALITY AND EFFECTS OF LITERATURE ON STUDENTS

The issue of quality of literature has already been discussed but it needs to resurface here because it seems clear that aspects of literary quality, language, and subject matter become intertwined and confused in the censorship debate. Also, many of the books used in English/language arts classes are trade books rather than textbooks and selection criteria are mainly aimed at textbooks while "learning materials" as a category subsumes trade books.

The National Council of Teachers of English in its pamphlet

Censorship: Don't Let It Become an Issue in Your Schools (1978) presents the important criteria for the selection of trade books. They are:

A) Literary Quality

- Literary quality relates to style of writing or the arrangement of words and sentences that best expresses the dominating theme. It includes sentence structure, dialogue and vocabulary. Literary quality is not affected by format or illustration.
- Characterization is an aspect of literary quality. An effectively realized character acts and speaks in a way that is believable for that character.
- Plot is another aspect of literary quality. The incidents of a story must be interrelated and carry the reader along to its climax.
- Still another aspect of literary quality is a story's theme, in which the philosophy of the author is expressed in the meaning of the story and often reflects developmental values in the growing-up process.

B) Appropriateness

- Factors to be considered in assessing the appropriateness of books are children's interests, the age level and/or maturity of children in relation to the book being considered, and the content, format and illustration. While the format and illustrations are not directly related to the elements considered under literary quality, they should complement the text as well as be evaluated on the basis of artistic standards.

C) Usefulness

- An important aspect of usefulness is the purpose for using books in relation to curriculum objectives.
- Basic to the selection of any book is the suitability of the text; but by no means is this to be construed to mean controversial materials will not be used.
- Accuracy is important in nonfiction and in fiction in regard to theme, setting, characters, and incidents.
- Authenticity is important in fiction and biography, especially in those books with a historical background.

D) Uniqueness

- All books are unique. Their uniqueness may be a result of their theme, plot, style of writing, characterization, format or illustration. Such books may have a special place and use in the classroom and library. Teachers must know what it is

about a book that makes it unique, and must share this information with others.

E) Breadth of Coverage

- Books may present problems of stereotyping with respect to sex and to race. Religion, politics, and questions of morality or patriotism are issues about which there are considerable differences of opinion. The importance of such books may lie mainly, or only, in their historical viewpoint and should be presented as such to children who read them. Teachers and librarians should be aware of these considerations and should make every effort to provide materials which present alternate points of view. Historically there have always been those who have recognized the offensiveness of these materials. Children, like adults exposed to new ideas, can accept or reject them, based on input from all viewpoints.

Most challenges to books in English/language arts classrooms arise from a belief that books have negative (and positive) effects on readers, and further that books have the power to change the behaviour of readers. Although the effects of literature are virtually impossible to validate, there is research that shows other factors have much greater influence upon students' actions, attitudes, and beliefs than does literature.

Beach (1979) states that a reader's response to a work may or may not be related to the way in which he or she is affected by the work. A reader may be emotionally moved by a work, but that does not necessarily mean that the experience changes his or her attitude or behavior. "The work is not simply a stimulus that causes an effect on a passive reader; the nature of the reader's experience with the work is influenced by the reader's personality, reading ability, values, attitude, and reason for reading" (p. 132).

Beach (1979) summarizes the research on response to reading in these statements:

- (1) Readers respond in a highly unique manner to works;
  - (2) The same reader responds differently to different works;
  - (3) Differences in readers' responses are due to differences in readers' personality, sex, literary training, age, reading ability, cognitive development and other characteristics.
- (pp. 132-133)

Research indicates that reading does not have much short term effect on readers' attitudes or behaviour. This suggests that readers' attitudes and/or behaviours are symptomatic of stable aspects of personality which are influenced more by parents, peers, schooling, and cultural socialization than by reading (p. 133).

Censors assume that not allowing a student access to a book will deter his or her interest in the content portrayed in the book, and his or her desire to read such a book. In fact there is research indicating that censorship itself enhances the desire for a book.

Readers project their own experiences or identify style into a book, thereby deriving different meanings from the same book. A reader with high achievement orientation will react positively to characters in a story with similar personality traits. A reader's identity style is the most important determinant of differences in response. Readers recreate what the writer has written in terms of their own identify. Readers also differ in response according to personality development. As adolescents develop more tolerant, flexible, and complex personalities, they attribute more complexity to characters. Readers' values, like their personalities,

remain relatively stable. They are therefore more likely to impose values on works than change their values as a result of reading certain texts.

The research on readers' responses to literature raises some doubt as to the effectiveness of censorship consistent with its intent, to prevent exposure leading to change in attitudes or behaviour and to deter availability, especially to adolescents. If exposure does not lead to change in attitudes or behaviour, then arguments for censorship must fall back on objections to the intrinsic characteristics of works.

Would-be censors often assume that other readers will respond similarly to the same book — that if the book has undesirable meanings for them, it will have undesirable meanings for all readers. Readers' values are determined by family, peers, schooling, and the media to a far greater extent than by reading. Claims are made that books dealing with sex are harmful to adolescent development. However there is research suggesting that exposure to sexual material may be an integral part of normal adolescent sexual development, providing information about sex not available elsewhere, particularly in the home environment where it might be avoided altogether. The research also suggests that adolescents deprived of such material do, in some cases, experience deviant sexual development (p. 153).

Northrop Frye (1963) states that the issues involved in censorship draw attention to the absence of any clear line of connection between literature and life. "Because of the large involuntary element in writing, works of literature can't be treated as embodiments of conscious will or



intention, like people,..." (p. 38). Frye believes that it is impossible to give a legal definition of obscenity in relation to works of literature because what happens to the book depends mainly on the intelligence of the judge. The same process occurs with the reader as judge in a nonlegal sense.

In short, Frye states that novels can only be good or bad in the categories that readers create for them. "There's no such thing as a morally bad novel: its moral effect depends entirely on the moral quality of its reader,.... And if literature isn't morally bad it isn't morally good either" (p. 39).

#### A CHALLENGED MATERIALS POLICY

Parents and citizens must maintain the right to challenge the use of certain titles in English/language arts classrooms, and in any other classroom. Recognizing this, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the NCTE strongly advise that all school districts establish procedures by which any person may challenge a book or other learning material.

Judith Dick in the CLA publication Not in Our Schools?!!! (1982) provides guidelines for all involved parties in a challenge. First, concerned parents should make personal and individual decisions regarding materials, without relying unduly on the opinions of others. The entire book, not just parts, should be read. Parents are advised to discuss the material in question with their children before approaching the teacher or school. Discussion should centre on the material itself, not the teacher.

Finally, if after an honest evaluation and open discussion the problem is not resolved, a formal complaint should be made in writing to the school. This is where a challenged materials policy and procedures come into play. English/Language Arts teachers must be firm in pressing for the development of written policy to handle challenged materials. A formal complaint should be made on a challenged materials form provided by the school. The form should ask the complainant(s) to indicate whether the material has been read in its entirety, what the criticism is, and what action they would like taken.

A review committee, representing a spectrum of interests including parents, teachers, students, university professors, supervisors and/or others should be constituted. (Note: The Canadian Library Association recommends a challenged materials policy developed by Vancouver School District #39.)

The Manitoba Association of Teachers of English (MATE) in 1980 and 1981 prepared a statement which encompassed a rationale for the place of literature in the curriculum, guidelines for selection of literature, guidelines for developing a challenged materials policy and procedures for use in Manitoba schools. The MATE statement is reproduced in edited form here; it represents a comprehensive yet reasonably succinct statement. (The official NCTE guidelines for developing challenged materials policy and procedures is found in the pamphlet The Student's Right to Read [1982]).

## STATEMENT ON THE PLACE OF LITERATURE IN THE CURRICULUM

Prepared for M.A.T.E. April, 1980.

The study of literature should effect the student's personal growth and improve his reading and composition skills.

## Personal Growth

The study of literature should lead to imaginative, emotional, moral and linguistic growth. The bare facts about human life may be studied through biology, psychology, history, sociology and anthropology, but through literature students may learn to see with the heart, to participate imaginatively in a variety of circumstances and identities. Rather than simply learning facts about other people in other circumstances, students learn to share those experiences vicariously. The study of literature should deepen their insights and extend their range of understanding, sympathy and tolerance, liberating them from the confines of an adolescent subculture in a TV generation.

Through literature, readers may come to understand the moral, psychological, spiritual, physical and social forces which have shaped their own growth. In this way, they may develop objective distance on their subjective experience. They may develop new goals for personal development.

Rational understanding and emotional empathy, two bases of moral behaviour, should develop together as students study a variety of literacy genres and modes. Through idealistic short stories or novels, students may begin to choose their own heroes. Through Shakespearian tragedies or modern novels, they learn to identify villainy. Through realistic fiction they may learn that most people are a mixture of frailties, with capacities for virtue and vice, vanity and foolishness. Students reflect on what should or should not be as they read fantasies and satires. The study of a varied but balanced programme is an integral part of a student's values education.

## Reading Skills

Readers will only profit from their vicarious imaginative experience, will only grow morally and emotionally if they have certain literary skills: they must be able to discern the overall purpose of the literary work so that the parts are seen in proper proportion to the whole; they must be able to distinguish between the character's language and

the author's language; they must be able to distinguish between honest literature and propaganda. The study of literature should increase the student's ability to read with discernment.

Much of this learning will be conscious if the student is enjoying his/her literary experience. And if the experience of reading is happy, the student will be disposed to read more. Joy is a legitimate goal.

### Language Skills

The perception of literature as human experience is furthered by an expression of student response. Expression and perception are mutually reinforcing. Students may respond both informally and in a more structured manner. Talking about individual works affords readers the opportunity to organize and verbalize reactions which might otherwise remain as dimly felt emotions. A reader's response to the literature may also be expressed through interpretive reading to provide for some interplay of emotion and reason. Dramatizing scenes is another method and is especially important in developing a sense of the uniqueness of drama as a genre.

In addition, students may respond through imaginative writing such as dialogue, narrative, poetry, and journals. One of the goals of the study of literature is the ability to communicate to different people at different times in an acceptable form. Literature provides models of communication. Various models demonstrate how language changes to serve different purposes or different audiences.

Literature conjoins with language development to expand vocabulary and to develop perception of: the power of language, the levels of languages and meaning, the modes of discourse, the ability to assess a writer's purpose. The study of literature helps to develop an understanding of the creative process. Through the study of literature, one should become better equipped to communicate more precisely and effectively to a given audience.

### CHALLENGED BOOKS IN CANADIAN SCHOOLS

To end this section on Censorship I thought it useful to provide a

partial listing of titles that have been the subject of challenge and censorship efforts. The list has been compiled from Canadian newspaper and journal articles about controversial materials in Canadian schools. Where possible the complaint has been stated in the words used in the articles. (I am indebted to Judith Dick (1980) for this listing.)

The listing is provided in order that English/Language Arts teachers might anticipate challenged titles should there be reason to think that censorship might arise in their schools. Should English/Language Arts teachers be using books on this list in their classrooms it might be wise to either develop a written rationale for the use of each title, or to discuss the rationale for using the books among other English/Language Arts teachers.

Book Title	Reason
All Quiet on the Western Front (Remarque)	unfit language
Animal Farm (Orwell)	dust cover anti-semitic
Anne Boleyn (Anthony)	deals with one girl's prepubescent interest in men's attraction
Are You There God, It's Me Margaret (Blume)	immoral
The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (Richler)	immoral
Bang, Bang, You're Dead! (Fitzhugh)	violence
Beautiful Losers (Cohen)	immoral
Canadian Short Stories (Weaver, ed.)	filth
Catch 22 (Heller)	filth, immoral
Catcher in the Rye (Salinger)	unChristian, profanity, immoral, lewd suggestions
The Chosen (Potok)	filth
The Country Girls (O'Brien)	sex scenes
The Diary of Anne Frank	
The Dispossessed (Malamud)	
The Diviners (Laurence)	immoral, profane
Dr. Dolittle	unfit language, immoral, atheistic, deals with

Go Ask Alice (Anonymous)  
Grapes of Wrath (Steinbeck)

Huckleberry Finn (Twain)  
Harlequin Romances  
In the Heat of the Night (Ball)  
A Jest of God (Laurence)  
Listen to the Silence (Elliott)  
Lives of Girls and Women (Munro)

Lord of the Flies (Golding)  
Love Story (Segal)  
Man from St. Malo (Ferguson)

Mao Tse Tung (Macdonald Starter)  
Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare)  
More Joy in Heaven (Callaghan)  
The Mountain and the Valley (Buckler)  
My Darling, My Hamburger (Zindel)  
Nineteen-Eighty-Four (Orwell)  
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich  
(Solzhenitzen)  
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Kesey)  
Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck)

Peking Review  
Rabbit Run (Updike)  
Sally Go Round the Sun (Fowkes)  
September Song (Martin)  
Son of a Smaller Herc (Richler)  
Story and Structure  
"Defender of the Faith" (Roth)  
Strawberries and other secrets  
(MacNeill)  
Surfacing (Atwood)  
Then Again Maybe I Won't (Blume)  
To Kill a Mockingbird (Lee)  
Winnipeg Stories (Parr, ed.)  
Who Has Seen the Wind (Mitchell)

mental ... ation  
sex scenes, ...  
blasphemous, pornographic  
and filthy language  
racism

sex scenes  
rape  
pornography, explicit  
descriptions of sex scenes

sex  
paints Indians as savages,  
racism  
communist  
racism  
profanity, unChristian  
filth, sex scenes  
abortion, immoral  
unfit language  
filth, unfit language

blasphemous, pornographic  
and filthy language  
communist

unfit language  
filth  
filth, immoral  
profanity

violence

immoral  
unfit language  
premarital sex  
filth, profanity,  
unChristian

## GROWTH IN RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

I have argued for teacher and student self-selection of literature that meets the individual and, at times, group needs of students. Such a process demands that teachers become soundly aware of the developmental aspects of students response and growth in response to literature; and how students develop reading processes through literature. In this section I discuss early experiences of children with literature; and the development of and growth in their response to literature. I argue, along with Alan Purves, for a response-centred curriculum.

### EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH LITERATURE

The emergence of a child's literary awareness and sensibility is a developmental feature and exposure to literature early in a child's life is essential. "To a large extent, children and young people exercise 'censorship' of what they read by their own development and by their own growing ability to understand life" (Seifert, 1981, p.33).

Story telling is an important way of making sense of experience, and from their earliest years children know what a story is. They also spontaneously tell stories. "By the time they are ten they can identify a hero or a heroine, villain, the archetypal features of comedy and tragedy, the 'sense of an ending', a verbal joke, the difference between realism and fantasy" (Meek, 1982, p. 86).

Children have literary intuitions that derive from literary play

with rhymes, jingles, word play, stories, verses, and games. The lore and language of childhood is a genuine folk literature in the oral tradition. In short, young children learn literature from hearing it, from playing with it, from speaking it, and from inventing it. Initial literary experience is fostered by adults reading to children and telling stories to children.

Appropriate fiction can significantly affect what is learned in other parts of the curriculum and outside the school because children's views of the past, their ideas of other countries, their attitude toward scientific discovery, economic and resource development can be radically affected by the stories they read and hear. "Storying" is an essential element in consciousness; the narrative mode characterizes the strongest motivation for reading in both children and adults. Children develop an appetite for stories long before they can read or write. Narrative is an essential element in our understanding of reality, and it has been said that we cannot think, act or desire except in narrative, that we may live more by fiction than by fact. We turn our lives into stories (Protherough, 1983, pp.19-20).

If youngsters are steeped long and fully in good literature of all sorts, the first stories they write may well be very obvious borrowings of content just as their play-acting is largely taking on the roles they see around them, but through this imitation they identify with storytellers and become like them. Not only is this imitation desirable but so is changing a piece of literature into another form. As youngsters,



say, read comic strips and summarize the pictures and actions into a narrative, they are learning a lot about what a story is. Changing any non-narrative into a story develops one's storytelling style.

(Moffett & Wagner, 1983, p.277)

Early childhood is characterized by egocentrism, the inability of the child to distinguish between his point of view and that of others. A young child is likely to consider a story and his reaction to it as one and the same. Since stories can conjure up basic, vivid feeling in the very young, adults need to ponder which feelings we want to recreate in them. Probably we want to select materials that deal with negative human characteristics (fear, aggression, selfishness) as well as positive ones, but we want to make sure that the negative ones do not overwhelm the positive ones.

Little children, too, tend to think objects and their names are connected intrinsically. Thus, for them, stories cannot be altered in any way without changing the story; in other words, only one version of a story exists. This nominal realism confuses the difference between fact and fiction. Gradually a child learns that words have only arbitrary, conventional relationships to the things and events they represent. As this realization unfolds the notion of 'fiction' is born, and separated from fact and literal truth.

Teachers can help children through this development by pointing out the difference between fact and fiction in the stories children read. This

does not mean evaluating one form of literature as better than another, nor does it mean protecting a child from too much realism or too much make-believe. In early childhood the child need know only that both stories tell something of how human relationships are or might be.

In later childhood, as children acquire gradually the ability to classify objects and events, they begin deciding what type of literature they are reading by comparing it to other pieces like it or different from it. The late elementary child still cannot think very abstractly, and often interprets literature too literally. Only an abstract thinker can notice and follow two layers of meaning at once; when this stage of thinking occurs the reader is no longer in need of literary supervision. (Siebert, 1981)

#### LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The teaching of literature is unfortunately often neglected in the elementary school. Too often we make a decision between reading and literature, with reading skills being taught apart from the books that children read for pleasure. In order to teach a sequenced set of reading skills stories, poems, and even are written deliberately with controlled vocabulary and syntax. Literary elements such as characterization, theme, plot, mood, atmosphere and setting are neglected or become incidental to controlled language comprehension. Thus children often come to associate the material for developing reading skills with literature, and are unaware that a body of literature for children exists, unless it is discovered incidentally or at home.

Children must be introduced to literature for enjoyment during the elementary school years. Literature as part of language arts, but not reading instruction, "is a guided activity in which, through books, the student is led toward self-understanding, aesthetic appreciation, and perception of truths and values" (O'Donnell, 1973, p.3).

Because literature has been subsumed under reading there are few curriculum documents that deal with literature in the elementary school. Two good sources are to be found in the Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) and a supplementary curriculum guide produced by the Department of Education in Nova Scotia entitled Literature in the Elementary School (1978). The focus here is on the Nova Scotia Document.

Literature in the Elementary School defines literature as fiction and nonfiction, poetry and prose, print and nonprint. Through a systematic program of study in children's literature children in the elementary school years should:

- a) increase their enjoyment of literature and their desire to read;
- b) participate imaginatively in the cumulative experience of the culture through literature;
- c) develop insight into human experience through literature that confirms, illuminates and extends their life experiences;
- d) grow as independent and critical participants in an exchange of ideas about literature;
- e) grow in their ability to discriminate in the choosing of what they need;
- f) become critics of their own perceptions of literary works.

(pp.2-3)

Such objectives require that children be allowed to read a wide range of literature, to discuss and respond to literature in a variety of ways, to critically analyze literature, to self-select literature to some extent, and to apply their own experiences to what they read. Thus the document describes three essential elements in an elementary literature program -- teacher directed classroom activities, literary resources (print and nonprint), and pupils' responses (p.4.). Further, the guide distinguishes between "reading skills" and "literary abilities", thus not confusing the aesthetic abilities developed through literature teaching with the decoding skills developed through reading instruction.

Literary abilities are described in terms of objectives for children as follows:

- a) Distinguishing various modes of story such as realism-fantasy, comedy-romance, tragedy-irony, genre, and traditional forms. (Children would not be expected to use these terms).
- b) Following different narrative sequences such as chronological, flashback, story within a story.
- c) Recognizing patterns of organization such as time, space, cause and effect, plotting.
- d) Noting and recalling significant detail (foreshadowing).
- e) Making inferences and comprehending implied meanings.
- f) Predicting outcomes.
- g) Perceiving authors' perspective and point of view.
- h) Detecting clues to mood and tone.
- i) Recognizing and responding to literary devices.
- j) Comprehending symbol and extended metaphor. (p.7)

It is not necessary that children use literary terms; the emphasis is on comprehension and developing awareness of the literary qualities of works.

The use of traditional literature is strongly recommended because it provides exposure to less complex literary forms which form the basis for high school students in their understanding of adult literature. Narrative form is developed through traditional literature, and some knowledge of Greek mythology is required for a developed understanding of much English literature. Folk literature too opens the possibility for intercultural understanding provided the translation and renderings are of high quality (p.38).

Evaluation of the literature program is also covered in the Guide. Children and the teacher should keep daily or weekly records on their progress, with plans for future literary experiences. A child's record would include all the works of literature he/she has heard, read or seen, and reports of any activities which stemmed from those experiences. The teacher's record would include notes on observations, discussions, checklists of literary abilities, and samples of a child's work, dated and commented upon to show evidence of personal growth (p.44).

On the issue of children's fixation on certain authors, the guide gives this advice:

Our task as teachers is to develop our own sensitivity to literary works and to help children expand their literary horizons both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys may be neither great literature nor inspired television programs, but they are not to be denied

children any more than we would forbid adults to read Ian Fleming or Agatha Christie. On the other hand, we need not emphasize such mediocre items in the classroom and should concentrate on sharing materials with children that stretch their ability to comprehend and appreciate literary forms. (p.1)

### ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

During the past ten years there has been a vast amount of literature written and published for the adolescent or young adult. This literature has been written with the needs, interests, and abilities of young adults in mind. Since much of it deals with the problems — personal, psychological, social and sexual — faced by adolescents a good deal of controversy has arisen among parents and adults over its use in schools. What is adolescent or young adult literature, what literature appeals to adolescents, and how should such literature be used in schools?

When it comes to describing the characteristics of adolescent literature the issue arises of what defines an adolescent. Stages of adolescence can be mapped in terms of types of books read. In the early teen years most adolescents tend to read mystery-adventure stories. Next they move into the teenage story that deals with school life, family relations, and problems of adolescent life such as drugs, sex, alcoholism, and so on. Then they move into adult books and read first the popular kind that deal with young adult life — the kind of book that makes a popular motion picture. As they continue to mature they move into the more significant and enduring works of twentieth century writers, particularly

those dealing with the problems of young people. And finally somewhere at the college/university level they may develop an interest in the older classics. (Carlsen, 1979, pp. 198-199)

In terms of psychological development adolescent readers seek certain satisfaction from books. Early in adolescence, teenagers are concerned with their own ego and status. They seek assurance that they are important, that they can and will be able to solve anything that life presents them. In juvenile series books, heroes and heroines are generally teenagers who can solve any problem, even those that adults find unsolvable. Parental control is absent; parents are dead or away, and the teenager is on his/her own. During mid-adolescence (14-16 years) teenagers have a psychological need to test their own normality as they experience new emotions, a changing body, and new kinds of relations which lead to confusion. Most adolescent girls can recognize themselves in Anne Frank and most boys can project themselves into the problems of Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye. At 16 and 17 years literature becomes the vehicle for stimulating teenagers' thinking about the dilemmas of human life -- justice, religion, one's relationship to the culture, ambiguities in the human psyche. (Carlsen, 1979, pp. 199-200)

Many adolescent books deal consciously or unconsciously in their plots with the rites of passage. Simplified, rites of passage suggests three stages: (1) separation from childhood, (2) testing and imitation, and (3) incorporation. There are rites of passage in literary development as well.

From an early delight in narration for its own sake, teenagers move

to books that make them think first about themselves and their peers, and finally to books that deal with bigger problems of humanity.

Some educators and parents might question the use of adolescent literature when adult literature is available in the junior and senior high school. Such critics might suggest that adolescent literature for adolescents is "inherently committed to contributing to the epidemic contemporary disease of narcissism" (Summerfield, 1982, p. 67). The issue in question is a distinction between teaching about literature and teaching through literature. The use of adolescent novels as a vehicle for the teaching of structure is probably an unwise educational decision. Students tend to lose interest in adolescent reading materials if these are used as illustrations of critical concepts rather than novels for their own experience. (Wittmack, 1980)

Those who criticize the content of some teenage fiction may fail to realize that teenagers watch television and videos and are quite likely to have seen such as "Clockwork Orange" or "Pretty Baby". At a superficial level, contemporary teenagers know it all. English teachers have a right to explore in some depth, in the course of a novel, the topics glossed glibly over in many films and videos. "Better surely an S.E. Hinton story than an Ian Fleming: the serious as opposed to the glamorous treatment, in literature, of sex and violence is of paramount importance" (Moss, 1977, p.337).

Most good writers for young adults are sensitive to the rhetorical features of fiction: rhythm, pacing, relative density, disposition of



episode, etc. Good prose for adolescents stays close to the distinctive characteristics of storytelling. Works to be read should be chosen both for their value as literature as well as for their possible bearing on psychological reactions of young adults.

What is a good teenage novel? This question was put to Sylvia Engdahl, a writer of teenage novels. Part of her response follows:

First, few if any of the good ones are easier to read than the average adult novel considered suitable for younger high school students. Writers for teenagers do not limit vocabulary, nor do they use a less complex style than they would in fiction for adults (except in the case of stories specially produced for 'slow readers', which are not read in the literary sense).

Second, novels of quality for teenagers do not preach. A writer who approaches young people in a condescending way receives short shrift from today's editors and reviewers. One can use a story to reflect one's views, just as an author of adult fiction can - but they must be views about life, not about how young people, as distinguished from other people, ought to look at it.

Third, teenage novels, if good, are not devoid of

concepts are interesting and worth discussing. Although fiction for young ordinarily stays within the bounds of good taste, its themes are confined neither to traditional ideas nor to fashionable new ones. Thus it can hardly be called uncontroversial.

A fourth thing novels for adolescents do not offer is shelter from the world as it is. Because of their honesty, such books cannot ignore the grimmer aspects of life any more than they can ignore aspects some adults consider shocking.

Finally, contemporary teenage novels are not mere vehicles to provide reluctant readers with a fictional reflection of their own lifestyle and their own specific problems.

(Hook & Evans, 1982, pp. 155-156)

#### RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

Insofar as we divorce the study of literature from the experience of reading and view literary works as objects to be analyzed rather than human expressions to be related to; insofar as we view them as providing order, pattern and beauty, as

opposed to challenge and disturbance; insofar as we favor form over content, objectivity over subjectivity, detachment over involvement, theoretical over real readers; insofar as we worry more about incorrect responses than insufficient ones; insofar as we emphasize the distinction between literature and life rather than their interpretations we reduce the power of literature and protect ourselves from it.

(Slatoff, 1970, pp. 167-168)

Some of many issues involved in response to literature are succinctly juxtaposed in Slatoff's statement reproduced above, one made before Louise Rosenblatt's 1978 book on transactional theory, but a statement which has the same powerful meaning today as it did fifteen years ago.

This discussion or response is organized into six subsections. First comes a brief background to response to literature theory as it has influenced the teaching of literature. Next is a discussion of two Canadian perspectives on response theory. This is followed by a description of Rosenblatt's transactional theory of response, then Purves' response-centred curriculum. Fifth is a discussion of the concepts of participant and spectator roles as they apply to literature and the reader's experiential approach to literature, and the idea of narration and storying as literature. Finally covers a short discussion of analysis and criticism and their place in response to literature.

### Background to Response to Literature Theory

Rationales for literature teaching can be characterized as one of two types, text-centred and reader-centred. A text-centred rationale takes a subject approach, is discipline oriented, academic and focuses on cognitive processes of the student. A reader-centred rationale takes an experience approach, is reader oriented, humanistic, child-centred, and focuses on self-actualization and social reconstruction. Another way of stating the dichotomy of rationales is that a dilemma exists between the demand for a "correct" reading of a text and the Berkeleyan notion that the literary text exists only through the mind of the reader, that one can examine the reader, but that one cannot know the text (Wittmaack, 1980, p. 45).

New Criticism, (also known as the Formalistic Approach), adopts a text-centred approach. Those espousing this approach assume the existence of an ideal reader who assumes an objective stance towards the text in its intrinsic formal relationships. The reader does not attempt to explore his own feelings or those of others nor does he or she try to use background information for analysis. The relationship among the elements in a text is what is all important; the New Critic is preoccupied with the text itself.

Archetypal Criticism (Northrop Frye) seeks archetypes and myths in all literature. All literary works are analyzed for basic patterns and cyclical movements and can be traced from roots in religious scriptures (the Bible) and classical mythology. Archetypal criticism claims to hold

the key which enables the reader to perceive the structure of the discipline, literature. Each work is seen as a derivation of the one story. The teacher uses archetypal patterns as a means of classifying and selecting reading materials.

Norman Holland's (1975) psychoanalytical approach is an example of a reader-centred rationale. It examines the differences in reader's interpretations and explains them as a function of the differences between the lifestyles and identities of readers. It is in the early transactions between child and mother that readers learn to transact everything else. In short, the lifestyle and identity of the reader is the key to his or her literary experience. The reader seeks his or her own style, thereby generating an unique response.

David Bleich's subjective criticism (1975a, 1975b, 1978) is another example of a reader-centred rationale. The student is encouraged to draw upon his or her personal associations to express his or her feelings about literature. Collective subjectivity occurs when readers of the same age group, class, sex or regional origin respond in a similar way. A negotiated response is, in one context or another, negotiable into knowledge and may be reader-oriented (subjective motives, personal feelings), reality-oriented (centring on facts of the text), or experience-oriented (integrating the processes of perception, affect and association). Experience-oriented is the most complex response.

Alan Purves (1979) distinguishes between "meaning" and "significance" in his theory of response. "Meaning" derives from the

convergence of the reader, writer, and audience. "Significance" can occur in the personal realm of the reader or the writer and it can reside in the public realm shared by the reader and the audience. Both the teacher/audience and the student/reader may agree on a particular interpretation; they may think that they have achieved a particular interpretation. But if the writer is excluded from their consensus they share a cultural significance rather than agreement on the meaning of the text. Similarly, it is possible for two readers to create a divergent personal significance in their transactions with the text. The teacher must decide: 1) Is it preferable to foster personal or public significance; 2) Is complete convergence between reader, writer, and audience a feasible goal; and 3) How can the teacher manipulate convergence and divergence in reader response?

During the 1960s there began a shift from emphasis on teaching literary critical analysis towards the need for students to express their own responses to their reading. One of the assumptions of earlier literature instruction was that there was one correct meaning of a work residing in the work itself. An increased interest in the reader's response to a work is based on the changed assumption that there is no one correct meaning, but that meaning evolves from an interplay of reader and text. Thus, a work may mean different things to different readers. Figure 2 displays the characteristics of the dichotomous approaches which will illustrate the shift from a text-centred to a reader-centred rationale.

FIGURE 2

## Characteristics of the Text- and the Reader-Centred Rationales

	<u>Text-Centred Rationale</u>	<u>Reader-Centred Rationale</u>
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appreciation of form</li> <li>- recognition of recurring themes and archetypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discovery of identity-themes</li> <li>- exploration of feelings</li> <li>- negotiations of subjective responses into new knowledge</li> </ul>
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mediator between scholars and students</li> <li>- manager of sequential program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- therapist</li> <li>- colleague in the exploration and negotiation of responses</li> </ul>
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- miniature-scholar of the structure of the text or the structure of literature as a whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explorer of personal identity-themes</li> <li>- initiator of new knowledge</li> </ul>
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sequential programs based on concepts of literary criticism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unstructured exploration of unconscious and emotional experiences</li> </ul>
Reading Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bible, classical mythology, poetry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adolescent literature</li> </ul>
Type of Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- convergent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- divergent</li> </ul>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- existing order, or structure of the discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new, personal and negotiated knowledge</li> </ul>
Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- production</li> </ul>	

(Wittmaack, 1980, p. 110)

### Theories of Response: Canadian Perspectives

Deanne Bogdan (1984, 1985, forthcoming 1986) proposes five different kinds of responses and four levels that range between various degrees - total and partial - of engagement with or detachment from a literary work. Bogdan argues that as readers our habitual mode of responding to literature is some form of imbalance between thought and emotion: we either overintellectualize, and lack feeling, or oversentimentalise, and lack truth.

Of levels of response, the Precritical is primary. Precritical level response is undirected, initial emotional response. Precritical responses are either Stock (ego massage) or Kinetic (compulsive action); both are unthinking and narcissistic, and both mistake the part for the whole. Both responses involve engagement through either identification and clichéd thought (Stock) or engagement through visceral states with pseudo-feeling (Kinetic).

The Critical level of response is analytic, through various critical approaches, and involves the responder adopting a spectator stance of detachment, disinterestedness, intellectual inquiry, and textual dissection.

Third is the Postcritical level where response is informed, based on feeling and understanding. The final level, that of Autonomous response, is full, undirected, literary response. Our aim as literature teachers is to develop autonomous responders.



At both the Postcritical and Autonomous levels response can be Dialectical or Stasis. A Dialectical response involves intellectual and emotional working through of attaining imaginative identity with a literary work. There is oscillation between engagement and detachment, and there is contemplation.

Literature response as dialectic presupposes the kind of detachment that builds upon the emotional involvement of the precritical response in such a way that response can be deepened, refined, and enriched by aesthetic distance ... . By regarding response to literature as dialectic, literature teachers gain the best of both worlds of engagement and detachment: ... (1984; forthcoming 1986)

Stasis is the ideal stage of imaginative identity with the literary object, typified by the fusion of intellect and emotion, one which literature teachers always aim at but only rarely succeed in triggering. It is at the same time the most primitive and most sophisticated of responses. It involves the total form of a literary work, invoking the reader's active cooperation in recreating the text. Stasis results from the simultaneous perception and experience of the total form of a literary work, however fleeting that glimpse might be. Teachers cannot deal with stasis in the classroom, because "... it is usually marked by a recession of cognitive faculties and a near paralysis of linguistic powers" (1985, forthcoming 1986).

Bogdan believes that literary value is earned. Leading students to a

closer look at the literary work through the detachment of the critical response will raise them from ego-massage (Stock response) to reading as dialectic or a meditation on life. On literary criticism she writes:

Criticism is simply a way of effecting a shift of perspective in the student, of wrenching the mind out of habitual modes of thought so that s/he can actually "see more than words on a page." (1984, p. 73)

For Bogdan literary response as dialectic is the total form; it endeavours to actualize the total form of a literary work through the alternation between engagement or the participating response, and detachment or the critical response. Literature as dialectic gives us the best of both worlds of engagement and detachment (1985, pp. 15-16; forthcoming 1986).

Don Gutteridge (1983) offers a response hypothesis gleaned from twenty years of "experiments with, and observations of, question-types in grades seven to thirteen" (p. 37), stressing the text-reader-teacher relationship. His hypothesis is that

all readers, once they reach a reflective, self-conscious stage in their reading experience, respond to literary texts in three phased stages: the Basic, the Rhetorical, and the Moral-Thematic. (p. 37)

Most students before age twelve will respond to a teacher's questions only at the Basic stage. Responses are such that they can be referred to as

the literal aspect of a story or as its content. If a question about the story can be resolved by facts or groups of facts and without reference to special terminology or extrinsic experience then it probably belongs to the Basic comprehension stage (pp. 38, 41-42).

At the Rhetorical stage are questions which call for processing of the information of the story with reference to its normative/descriptive effects on the reader. "Rhetorical comprehension is very much having an awareness of the elements of story-telling through their immediate effects on us: plot, character, setting, diction, tone, story-teller, suspense, foreshadowing" (p. 42). Questions of purely aesthetic or literary intent are excluded because they involve a very high level of inference as well as knowledge beyond the text. The Rhetorical stage of comprehension requires a second reading with special attention to verbal cues and to reinterpretation of initial responses made during the Basic stage (pp. 42-43).

Moral-Thematic stage responses to a story involve connecting events in the text in such a way as to see patterns of meaning beyond the merely narrative. At this stage the reader needs to have an understanding of some of the experiential patterns of his or her own personal and social experience in order to be able to respond to these aspects when they are embedded in a story and its rhetoric.

Fiction is about things and about our response to things; it is not about morals per se; it presents a view of life for our response, and when that response involves a choice or a decision, then the reader's moral sensibility is aroused. (p. 43)

Gutteridge believes that these stages are always part of the way fiction is read, from grade seven to higher education. "Probably the clearest mark of a fully mature reader is his ability to retreat to the stage he needs at any given moment" (p. 39). The stages are intrinsic to the way everyone reads fiction.

Comprehension for the most advanced and experienced readers at the Rhetorical stage evolve into the Literary/Generic stage. At this stage the conscious knowledge of genres, gained from wide reading in literature, is brought to bear on the text for the purpose of deepening and broadening Moral-Thematic comprehension (p. 41).

#### Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Response

Responding to literature and reading for meaning are really the same thing. A child's response to literature - to a poem, short story, play or novel - conveys the meaning he or she has gathered from the print. The child's response to literature is the expression of meaning he or she has found there.... encouraging children to explore diverse responses to literature is a way of generating new understandings: in other words, opportunities for the reader to make his own meanings from print.

(McGregor & Meiers, 1983, p.53)

Rosenblatt's transactional theory saw its genesis in her early work Literature as Exploration, first published in 1938 and most recently in 1976. In the latest edition (1976) she writes:

First is the necessity not to impose a set of preconceived notions upon the proper way to react to any work. The student must be free to grapple with his own reaction. This primary negative condition does not mean that the teacher abdicates his duty to attempt to instill sound habits or sound critical attitudes. Nor does this imply that historical and biographical background material will be neglected. (p. 66)

Her transactional theory was not explicated until 1978 when she published The Reader the Text the Poem. The term "poem" refers "to the whole category of aesthetic transactions between readers and text" (p.12). The "poem" is an event in time, a coming-together of a reader and a text. "The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshalls his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem" (p.12). The poem is the transaction between reader and text. The transaction involves not only the past experience but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader (p. 20).

Rosenblatt recognizes that different texts result in different transactions. "Efferent" reading designates the type of reading in which

the reader's primary concern is with what he or she will carry away from the reading - the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the action to be carried out. "Aesthetic" reading occurs when the reader's primary concern is with what happens during the actual reading event (p.24). "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centred directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (p. 25). Literature almost always results in aesthetic reading.

However, the same text may be read either efferently or aesthetically, depending upon the purpose the reader brings to the text, and the expectations imposed upon the text. The distinction between aesthetic and efferent reading derives ultimately from what the reader does, the stance he or she adopts and the activities he or she carries out in relation to the text.

At the extreme efferent end of the spectrum, the reader disengages his attention as much as possible from the personal and qualitative elements in his response to the verbal symbols; he concentrates on what the symbols designate, what they may be contributing to the end result that he seeks - the information, the concepts, the guides to action, that will be left with him when the reading is over. At the aesthetic end of the spectrum, in contrast, the reader's primary purpose is fulfilled during the reading event, as he fixes his attention on the actual experience he's living through. This

permits the whole range of responses generated by the text to enter into the center of awareness, and out of those materials he selects and weaves what he sees as the literary work of art.

(pp. 27-28)

No distinct line separates efferent (scientific or expository) reading on the one hand from aesthetic reading on the other hand. It is more helpful to think of a continuum, a series of gradations between the extremes. The "distinction between nonaesthetic and aesthetic lies not in the presence or absence of emotive or cognitive elements but in the primary direction or focus of the reader's attention" (p.45). Interpretation involves primarily an effort by the reader to describe in some way - not necessarily verbally - the nature of the lived-through evocation of the work.

Rosenblatt recognizes that readers often maintain a desire to ascertain the author's intentions. With most texts the naive reader, she believes, automatically assumes that his or her interpretations approximate the author's meaning. "The more sophisticated reader knows, however, that there may be a great gap between his interpretation and the author's intention" (p.113).

There exists in her writing the recognition that "those who seek a unitary criterion of interpretation fear that the alternative is complete subjectivism, the reader "alone" (p.113). Deanne Bogdan (1984) warns against the danger of espousing either engagement with or detachment from

the text as a unitary criterion of response. "As readers, our habitual mode of responding to literature is invariably some form of imbalance between thought and emotion: we either overintellectualize - and lack feeling - or sentimentalize - and lack truth" (Bogdan, 1984, p.1). Bogdan argues for - and Rosenblatt would agree - a balance between engagement with and detachment from the text. Rosenblatt's efferent and aesthetic reading allow just for this; readers can read a text first aesthetically, then return for a second efferent reading where they detach self from the transaction or event and attend to the language of the text.

Children bring their own meanings to print - their personal knowledge, understanding and interest - and the kinds of meaning they make of the print vary accordingly. Teachers bring meaning to print by providing ways into the print: that is, by creating situations, and contexts where there are clear and readily achievable purposes in reading, and where prior knowledge of the language is there to guide children into the print.

(McGregor & Meiers, 1983, p. 53)

### A Response-Centred Curriculum

Alan Purves (1972) advocates a response-centred literature curriculum in consonance with the theories of Holland, Bleich, and Rosenblatt. His argument is that at the centre of the literature curriculum are not the works of literature but the mind as it meets the



book, the response (p.27). He recognizes that although works and people are unique, and responses are unique, there are nevertheless points where responses touch and overlap. Thus he offers these three points of agreement:

1. If everybody in a group is responding to the same poem, the common point is the poem.
2. If a person is responding to a poem, a play, and a novel, the common point is the person.
3. If a group of people are talking about novels they have read, the common point is the language they are using to talk with. (p.37)

Purves admonishes that the learning of classificatory terms and critical description needs to be held to a minimum; in a response-centred curriculum the central focus must be the experience of the reader with the text. But he notes that there are useful terms such as 'story', 'poem', 'word', 'repetition', 'scene', 'pattern', 'narrator' or 'speaker', 'comparison' that are useful. Some terms are useful but not absolutely necessary - 'metaphor', 'symbol', 'plot', 'irony', 'rhyme', 'rhythm', 'voice', 'point of view', 'allegory'. And there are many terms that belong to the specialist - 'metonymy', 'iamb', 'sonnet', heroic couplet', 'bildungsroman', 'romantic irony'.

Four levels of response are suggested (from research) for developing students' responses. (1) Engagement - Involvement is the affective response, the one in which the reader feels, or does not feel,

identification or empathy. (2) Perception occurs when the reader views the work objectively. (3) Interpretation is the reader's use of either subjective or objective viewpoint in seeking to tell what the work means. Interpretation is translation of metaphor. (4) Evaluation is the reader's use of either subjective or objective criteria in seeking to compare a work with others and to assess its impact and importance. (pp. 87-88)

Engagement is perhaps the least sophisticated way of responding and evaluation the most. "Generally speaking, most talk about literature - and particularly with younger students - should start on the level of engagement - involvement. It should go on to include perception, interpretation, and evaluation, not necessarily in that order, and not usually in equal amounts" (pp. 88-89).

Responses need not be verbal. Responses may include writing a drama, radio, film, or television script, dramatizing scenes from plays and novels, improvised drama role play, dramatic reading of poems or plays, setting of poetry to a musical accompaniment, preparation of a visual comment using painting or photographic collage, recreation of the scene in a novel from the viewpoint of different characters, or the recreation of a scene from a different period in a contemporary setting and idiom (Wooley, 1982, p. 29).

### Participant and Spectator Roles

The concepts of participant and spectator roles in the making of and response to literature are important and powerful ones in the conceptualization of a theory for the teaching of literature. The concepts

were first used by D.W. Harding (1977) and developed by James Britton (1970, 1984) and Arthur Applebee (1977, 1978). The individual takes up the role of spectator of his or her own past or future experiences, of other people's experiences, past or future, and becomes a spectator of events that have never happened and could never happen, whenever he or she reads, hears, tells or writes a fairy story or its adult equivalent. An individual is a participant when he or she participates in events, such as an aesthetic reading. Whenever the reader plays the role of spectator of human affairs, he or she is in the position of literature (Britton, 1984, p. 325).

Then what kind of writing is literature? It is, I suggest, writing in the role of spectator -- spectator of other men's lives, of one's own past or future or might-have-been: writing freed from the participant's need to respond with action or decision: free to savour the emotions which participants must discharge in action or eke away in anxiety....I think we relish the role of spectator of other men's lives, or the mythical lives of fiction, for the simple reasons that we never cease to want more lives, more exciting or more successful: and for the further reason that we cannot conceive of pursuing this one and only life in blind ignorance of the lives around us whose many motives may involve us sooner or later.... (Britton, 1963, p.42-44)

Response to literature is impossible to separate from response to other media such as films, television plays, or from other spoken narrative and children's own personal writing. "In all of these the student contemplates represented events in the role of a spectator, not for the sake of active intervention. But since his response includes in some degree accepting or rejecting the values and emotional attitudes which the narration implicitly offers, it will influence, perhaps greatly influence, his future appraisals of behaviour and feeling" (Harding, 1977b, p. 379).

The spectator role offers the reader a way to articulate and explore his or her view of the world, presenting alternatives, posing contradictions, reconciling conflicts within the realm of his or her subjective, personal experience. The teacher's task in this spectator role process is one of questioning and cultivating response rather than one of teaching critical principles (Applebee, 1978, p. 134).

Another way of expressing response through the role of spectator is to consider that "both the content and function of reading are best understood within the context of the personal style or identity the reader is shaping" (Grant, 1984, p.7). We respond to literature in the same way as we create literature, through narration or storytelling. Our storying or narrating of the world precedes, shapes and persists beyond our storying of the literary text. The "interconnection between our storying of the world and of the text is the very foundation of our experience of literature" (Grant, 1984, p.7).

Grant introduces two types of storying, interpersonal and personal.

In interpersonal storying, the reading of fiction may be understood at its simplest level as the interaction between at least two modes of storying, the author's and the reader's, both modes being unique and personal, shaped by past linguistic and life experiences (p. 8). Intrapersonal storying involves development over time, the continuities and discontinuities between our storying from one occasion to the next, and according to the kind of access we have to other people's narratives, encountered through the patterning of events in life, through media such as film, and television, through listening, rendering stories aloud, and through silent reading (p.9).

### The Place of Analysis and Criticism

Formal analysis and literary criticism are not in opposition to a reader-centred approach. Rather, what we as literature teachers need to be constantly aware of is that formal analysis and undue attention to the writings of literary critics does not become the *raison d'être* of literature teaching, else students learn to distrust their own responses. Analysis and criticism occur naturally as students develop and mature – as they read, react, and articulate their responses. Skill at analysis must be placed in the context of, and subservient to, students' engagement with literature.

Informal criticism deals with human reactions to literature. D.W. Harding (1977b), in his seminar report on response to literature at the 1966 Dartmouth conference, declared that "at the university, as in the secondary school, the explicit analysis of literature should be limited to

the least required to get an understanding of the work, within the student's limits, and the aim should be to return as soon as possible to a direct response to the text" (p. 392).

The literature teacher may want to introduce some literary terminology as he or she moves in the direction of evaluating literature. Discussion may be simplified at the secondary level if students can share terms such as 'plot', 'character', 'scene', 'setting', and so on. "But it is important to emphasize that knowledge of literary terminology is no substitute for the experience of literature" (Judy, 1981, p. 156). Mastery of terms and the facile use of them by students is no measure of their ability to respond to literature.

Finally, Northrop Frye has this to say about the response process:

In all our literary experience there are two kinds of response. There is the direct response of the work itself, while we're reading a book or seeing a play, especially for the first time. This experience is uncritical, or rather pre-critical, so it's not infallible. If our experience is limited, we can be roused to enthusiasm or carried away by something that we can later see to have been second-rate or even phoney. Then there is the conscious, critical response we make after we've finished reading or left the theatre, when we compare what we've experienced with other things of the same kind, and form a judgement of value and

proportion on it. This critical response, with practice, gradually makes our pre-critical responses more sensitive and accurate, or improves our taste, as we say.

(Frye, 1963, p.44)

### READING AND RESPONSE PROCESSES

An understanding of the development of the reading and response processes is essential for English/Language Arts teachers if they are to successfully implement a literature program. First, English/Language Arts teachers need to know developmental stages in students' reading in order to select texts for different age and maturity levels. Second, awareness of developmental stages of response will familiarize the teacher with what to expect in the way of student response to different works of literature at different ages.

Here is presented one approach to the development of the reading process in students, and several perspectives on the development of response to literature. It is by no means an exhaustive review of the literature, but the approaches and perspectives presented are judged as most appropriate for use in the classroom.

### Stages in the Development of Reading and Response

A recent examination of children's responses to fiction in England

(Protherough, 1983) suggest that there are five major ways in which they see the process of reading fiction. These five can be arranged on a scale of increasing distance between the text and reader.

The five modes are described briefly:

**Mode 1: Projection into a character**

The most implied and most common way of experiencing: the reader is immersed in the book, identifies with some of the characters and imaginately becomes one of them, and loses self in that character's personality and situation.

**Mode 2: Projection into the situation**

The reader is in the book with the character, but does not identify with any one of them. Readers see themselves as spectators on the outskirts or margins of events, emotionally involved but unable to affect the action.

Readers often conceive themselves as being present but invisible to the characters.

**Mode 3: Associating between book and reader**

Readers are more concerned to establish links between themselves as readers with their own actual experiences and the people and situations of the book. They visualize the book in terms of their own world, and they imagine how they would feel and act if they were people in the story. Readers may realize the secondary world of the book by importing into it elements of their first-hand experience, or they may use the book as a testing-ground for their own feelings and ideas, or even both.



Mode 4: The distanced viewer

Readers describe their experiences as being removed from the character, watching them play out their roles. The reader is firmly outside the situation, but emotionally involved in what happens and wishing to be able to influence the outcome.

Mode 5: Detached evaluation

Older students neither identify nor empathize with the characters in the story, but analyze them more coolly. They read from a stance that is likely to inhibit emotional involvement with the story. Critical reading seems to be a form of behavior learned in school.

(Protherough, 1983, pp. 21-25)

Younger children (aged 11 to 12) are more likely to be classed in modes 1 or 2, while modes 4 and 5 draw mostly on students 14 and older. But there is no distinct correlation between age and mode. "What does seem to be associated with maturity in reading is the ability to operate in an increasing number of modes, according to the work being read and the mood or needs of the moment..." (p. 21). Growth in reading might be defined as the increasing ability to match modes of reading to the material being read.

David Jackson (1983) reports the results of case studies of students' encounters with fiction from ages 11 to 18. He identifies four linked but different phases of growth which represent general tendencies or possible patterns of development, and draws implications for the teaching

of literature.

**First Phase:** Trusting your own voice in an unfamiliar context, ages 11 to 12+.

Students at this phase apprehend what others say through story. Personal anecdote is used in their responses; "anecdotalizing is often their most confident and familiar way of homing in to the disturbing newness of a fresh reading experience in the classroom" (p. 98). Anecdotes often validate and encourage an immediacy of contact between the personal world and the world of the text that no other mode of thinking seems to make possible.

**Second Phase:** Expanding perspectives, ages 12+ to 14

"At this stage students are encouraged to move away from an exclusively egocentric perspective to a position where they are able to view situations from different points of view" (p. 94). Students develop a growing conscious recognition that the story has been deliberately constructed to express the writer's purposes. Teachers might concentrate at this stage on making explicit to students the shaping and patterning involved in story-making. One important aspect of form is an understanding of point of view. Emphasis at this phase should be on books that speak directly to readers, and at the same time introduce an unexpectedly different fictional mode that provokes more active participation from the reader, such as the diary narration in Flowers for Algernon (Daniel Keyes). Fiction that investigates other cultures, other emotional worlds, perspectives, and ways of living is appropriate too at this phase.

**Third Phase:** Reflective awareness, 14 to 16

This phase introduces a more careful consideration of language choice. Through small group talk, students build up patterns of meaning together, helping them to break out of an isolated commitment to a limited number of views to take on a broader perspective. "Translating their thoughts into another medium often produces a valuable distancing affect that helps the pupils to organize their reactions to the book more closely and connectedly" (p. 173).

Fourth Phase: Thinking aloud in public, ages 17-18

This phase focuses on the learning process involved in small group talk and informal writing.

Robert Protherough (1983) developed a model as a basis for discussing the responses of individual children to stories. The model contains stages or levels generalized from many individuals in the Hull (England) study which forms the basis of his book. Within each of the four major headings are stages which go from simplest to most advanced level of response, and the age range goes from 11 to 16.

A. **THEME:** Awareness of how narrative works.

Basic question: "In a sentence, what do you think this story is about:"

A1 One particular character or idea is snatched out of a complex structure and presented as the focus of the whole story.

A2 A fuller but inaccurate attempt to summarize the events or t

state the theme of the story. The mis-reading shows a failure to comprehend what is actually presented in the story.

A3 A vague or unfocused statement, accurate as far as it goes in grasping something of the main idea, but so open that again it could be applied to a number of stories.

A4 A more accurate narrative or thematic summary but one which misses an essential detail, because of a failure to distinguish between more and less significant events or because the meaning is reduced to a ready-made moral judgement.

A5 More perspective attempts briefly to convey the essential meaning, showing awareness that the events of the plot arise out of character, motive and situation. Some sense of what is significant, of the implication of events, despite the demand for brevity.

B. EMPATHY: Ability to 'read' people and their situations

Basic question: "Which of the characters do you feel most sympathy for, and why?"

B1 Answers that seem incoherent or irrelevant. In some of these cases a genuine explanation is 'buried' but not explicit, and further discussion might elicit it.

B2 Responses which abstract one specific, physical detail from the story, often a minor element. Characters are here seen exclusively in

terms of action: they are pitied because of what happens to them: losing, being hit, getting into trouble.

B3 Entering into an individual's situation at a relatively elementary level, and without relating significantly to any other characters. The focus is on the more devious, stock implications of a person coming off badly: losing a bet, being cheated, getting shown up.

B4 Sympathy grounded in the way a character suffers because of the actions or attitudes of others. The stress is on the feelings aroused in the central situations of the story.

B5 More complex sympathy with (rather than pity for) the character, relating with some psychological insight to the whole story. Characteristically concerned with the way in which characters view each other, and thus with such themes as lost illusions, vain hopes, sense of betrayal, acting badly with good intentions.

C. MOTIVATION: Ability to understand why people in certain situations act as they do.

Questions like: "Why do you think Granny put the coin in the fish's throat?" "Why do you think Odd stole the brooch?"

C1 Reasons that cannot be supported from the text, or which depend on a mis-reading.

C2 Obvious literal responses that avoid real explanation. These

work at the level of 'Ask a silly question and I'll reply in the same way...'

C3 Limited perception of the immediate, physical effects: to win, to sell, to give. These operational explanations focus on what the character will do or get physically.

C4 Reasons grounded in understanding of the character's feelings. Motivation is seen as resulting from or leading to certain emotions, rather than just as a means to physical ends.

C5 More coherent explanation in terms of character relationships within the situation. The reasons seen as appropriate here are those based on the supported effects of actions on other people.

D. PREDICTION: Ability to comprehend likely outcomes beyond the story in terms of the text.

Questions like: "What do you think will happen when Mr. Pierce gets the fish home?"

D1 Suggestions that are implausible in the light of the text, that are based on faulty assumptions or make unjustified inferences.

D2 Like C2, a literal response at a superficial level, without considering the implications of what is suggested. There is no awareness of 'and then what...?'

D3 Prediction involving some degree of empathy. These responses consider what the character's immediate thoughts and feelings are likely to be, but do not pursue them.

D4 Moves beyond the stage of D3 to consider what the ensuing action is likely to be. At this stage, children may project their own reactions into the character rather than imagining what that person would be likely to do in the situation.

D5 Awareness of a range of possible choices, and the selection of one that best seems to fit the character and the situation. Shows more ability to get outside the readers' personal reactions than D4.

Protherough found that when children's responses were classified according to the model, there was a high degree of consistency; that is, individuals seemed to respond at a similar level to each of the four major questions. Very few varied by more than one level across their four answers (p. 52).

In summary, ages 13 to 14 is a significant stage of development. At this age level most students have developed a range of modes of reading, they attempt to ground judgements in apparently 'objective' criteria, and they become capable of more sophisticated levels of response. The transition is one from circumstantial to circumspect judgement (p. 53).

Protherough (1983) also presents stages in children's development of evaluation of literature, drawn from the same Hull study. He describes

three broad stages, marked off from each other by the relationship that is envisaged between readers and text. At the most elementary level, judgements simply convert personal response into a generalized assertion such that 'if I like the story, it must be good'. At this level, characteristic of students ages 11 or 12, the stages are:

- (a) Unqualified assertion, as of a self-evident truth. 'It was good', or 'It was boring'.
- (b) Naming a preferred quality or type of story. 'I liked it because it was funny.'
- (c) Describing the theme or the plot. 'I enjoyed it because it was about sports'.

These types of evaluative statements are also common among seven to nine-year-old children (p. 40).

At the second and more mature level, judgements concentrate more on the relationship between the reader and the book. "Particularly in the 12 to 13 age group there is more awareness that personal response is the basis for assessment, and that individuals may not necessarily agree" (p. 40).

Stages at this second level are:

- (d) Specifying a particular effect on a reader. 'I liked the story because it made me tense and excited!'



(e) Personal reaction to the 'rightness' of the story. There is increasing concern with links between the story and personal experience. 'I like the way it stopped at the end, because it made you think what would happen next.'

At the third and most mature level, from 13 onwards, there are the beginnings of an attempt to find apparently objective reasons for evaluation. "Instead of simply describing the effects of reading on themselves, children seek reasons that will appear valid to others" (p. 41).

Third level stages are:

(f) Judgements of credibility. A concern for the 'rightness' of the story is narrowed to concentrate on how far the experiences seem 'real' or 'true'. 'I liked the story because it is something that can happen in everyday life.'

(g) Attempted technical judgements. 'There was a lot of descriptive words and I liked the characters.'

As students grow older the difference between liking and judging becomes clearer. Students learn that value judgements have to be substantiated by pointing to features in the text. "At this key stage of development, students learn (or fail to learn) that reading in a certain way, concentrating on certain elements in the story, is to become a critic. By trying to move them too quickly, however, by presenting texts that are

too difficult, by demanding over-sophisticated responses and making them feel that their own are inadequate, or by presenting stories as 'work' rather than a source of enjoyment, we may hamper rather than assist their development" (pp. 41-42).

In 1973 Gunnar Hansson reported the results of a study in which he asked older students to rank a number of criteria for making judgements about text, and then to rank those criteria which they thought were most important for teachers and scholars. The two lists were not only very different, but different in a significant way.

When the students rank for themselves, the most important criteria are the emotional impact of the work, the author's imagination, the moral significance of the work, and the author's sincerity. All these criteria, which pay attention to human qualities in literature...are placed low in the supposed ranking by experts and teachers. Instead, a number of purely formal criteria, such as form and style, aesthetic order, and symbols and metaphors, are considered to be very important.... Results of this kind may make us wonder about the way literature is taught at school, and what gives the students their opinions of what is more or less important to their teachers.

## THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

At this point in the monograph we come to the implication of the foregoing discussion for the teaching of literature. There are three aspects from which implications may be viewed - the teacher, the student, and the text or works of literature. I am proposing that response to literature be an element in the teaching of literature, and the first part in this section deals with how that proposal might be realized. Another subsection deals specifically with the role of the teacher in a response-centred curriculum; attention is directed toward the student also and the creation of classroom environments to enhance the response process. Finally, there is a subsection which places literature in the context of the English/Language Arts curriculum.

David Allen (1980), in his book on English teaching since the Dartmouth conference, noted Frank Whitehead's observation that a shift in theory had taken place since the mid-sixties. "The shift has constituted an erosion of belief in the power of literature as such, in the value of exposing oneself to the impact of the poem or story or novel for its own sake and a concurrent downgrading of the discipline of submitting oneself to the ordering of experience embodied in the actual words of the writer" (p.7). In my opinion the shift is still underway though there is the danger, as in any educational change, in dismissing outright old theory for the sake of new. Literature must still be able to be identified with powerful language, and not all responses to a work of literature are equally valid or worthwhile.

There have been numerous modes or approaches taken over the years towards literature. Shortly after the Dartmouth conference two noted American English educators conducted a survey of selected American high schools which consistently educate outstanding students in English. James Squire and Roger Applebee (in Purves, 1972, p.73) asked students to report the approaches used by their English teachers when presenting a poem to the class. Listed in order of frequency, the approaches used were:

- explication or analysis
- study of theme
- discussion
- reading aloud
- study of technical aspects
- listening to recordings
- study of poets' lives
- writing a poem
- writing an analysis
- oral interpretation
- memorization
- comparing of poems
- also outlining, precis writing, research, a study of the point of view, meter, use of study guides, etc.

Two years after Dartmouth the literary criticism approach still dominated literature teaching in American high schools which were at the forefront of English teaching. In that same year, D.W. Harding (in Squire, 1968, pp. 16-21) was advocating different modes of presentation of

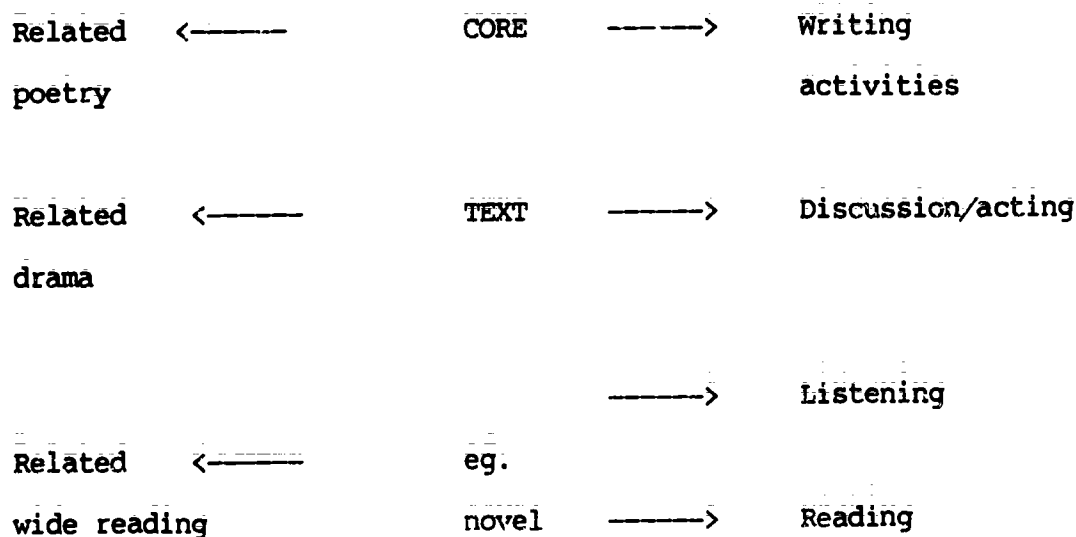
literature, suggesting that in any class, literature will be presented and used in different ways. Three modes of presentation were distinguished:

1. The individual child with the individual book. This approach entails classroom book collections, accessible and well-stocked school libraries, pupil-teacher conferences on books, class and group discussion of books.
2. Literature as group experience.  
Group experiences may include storytelling, folksongs and ballads, film viewing, listening to what others have written, creative dramatics, choral reading, oral interpretation, dramatic interpretation, role playing, listening to recorded literature.
3. Presentation of literary material accompanied by discussion.  
D.W. Harding advises that such direct presentation should normally be reserved for selections difficult for students. Works which are accessible to the individual reader should be read by students on their own.

Harding's committee also recommended approaches applicable at different levels of schooling. During the elementary years oral teacher presentation of literature is stressed followed by open response. During ages 10 to 15 they mandate scheduled individual conferences with each child. Most poetry should be introduced by the teacher, most often through oral reading followed by discussion. Interpretative readings and dramatic interpretation of scenes from plays are considered important. In general,

the committee stressed more oral approaches than were characteristic in many American schools at that time. During the later school ages of 15 to 18 literary experience may be increasingly extended through the use of recorded literature, films and theatrical experiences. Stephen Judy (1981, pp. 162-173) still advocates the Harding committee approaches in his textbook on the teaching of English.

Ken Watson (1981, p. 91) proposes a core text approach to be used in the whole class approach to a text. The approach is illustrated diagrammatically:



Critical analysis of literature, with the text as the centre of attention, has dominated English teaching for decades. Literary criticism was found to dominate literature teaching in the United States in 1968, and fifteen years later Protherough (1983) admonishes that critical analysis does have a place in literature teaching. He states (pp. 144-155) that it is helpful that students be introduced to what others have written about the novels they are studying; what matters is when and how this is done.

He suggests simple activities that might be practised to introduce students to ways of approaching the critics:

- (1) Ask students to consider how far the critic is revealed as a reader and how far the interpretation is presented impersonally as 'objective'. Ask them to distinguish facts from opinions. How far is an interpretation a matter of opinion? How can readers set about deciding how far an interpretation is true?
- (2) Provide two different interpretations of the story which vary markedly. Ask students to identify the points of difference, and then to discuss how they would propose to choose between them in each case. If there are issues that cannot be decided, then why is this? What does it suggest about interpretation?
- (3) Reproduce several descriptions of what a story 'means' according to different critics. Suggest that students, working individually, mark those with which they agree (+) and disagree (-). Ask them to compare their reactions, and to discuss particularly where there are differences. Discuss whether there is meaning 'in' the story or whether readers 'find' or 'make' meanings. What would their own statement of the meaning be?
- (4) Give everyone a copy of a brief critical account of a story, either written by a critic or yourself (as teacher). Ask them to consider carefully where they agree or disagree. Then ask them to identify any points where they feel that their own responses or opinions

have been affected by what they have just read. Get them to discuss their reactions with each other. Then ask if their responses have been further influenced by hearing others' views.

- (5) When the class has written a critical essay on a story, extract responses from a number of students and duplicate them or read them to the group. Ask them to discuss the points of difference. Are they anxious to know who the authors were? If so, what does this suggest about literary judgements?

### ENCOURAGING INTERPRETATION AND RESPONSE

The shift in theory identified by Frank Whitehead (in Allen, 1980, p. 7) and described in the introduction to this section creates what Robert Protherough (1983, p. 72) describes as aspects of discontinuity in our teaching of fiction at the secondary levels. He identifies three chief reasons for concern that are crucial for English educators in Canada as elsewhere:

1. There is often a wide discrepancy between the avowed purposes both of our formal curriculum statements and of what we say informally, and the methods and materials we actually use. The claim that literature will extend experience and knowledge of life can easily be made unreal by the inappropriate choice of books, or by close attention to trivia and exercises.
2. There is often a gulf between the kinds of responses encouraged in the middle years and those seen as appropriate in examinations.



The responses which teachers say they wish most to develop are precisely those which are most difficult or impossible to assess by examination.

3. To separate out subjective emotional responses and apparently objective critical thinking is surely to diminish and weaken both. The responses of enjoyment and the sense of personal development should be inseparable from knowing more about how stories work and from increasing the ability to compare and discriminate.

Ability to handle texts evolves through talking and sharing of elaborated responses to texts both made and read. Any act of reading (and writing) should address itself first to meanings (the meaning that the reader brings to the text as well as the meanings that the writer brought to it) and over a period of time to how these meanings intermingle and create new perspectives for the reader. Attention to how meaning takes its shape through form needs to come second, not first.

Both teachers and students need to articulate their interpretations of literature so that these can be shared and tracked for changes over time and through continued sharing. The teacher, as one reader among many, is one interpreter of the text but a specially experienced and reflective reader who can comment on the reading process and show students how to read. "The main drive of classroom discussion of literature should be towards rational reflection on issues or choice in values so that children generate the drive to act on their understandings of what is worthy and desirable. This means enhanced awareness of where they stand on value

questions, and where there are tensions between their values and the values of others" (Boomer, 1984 p.4).

The literary transaction in schools should involve

- (a) sympathetic identification
- (b) discovery and affirmation of values and attitudes
- (c) questioning of values and attitudes
- (d) movement towards new values and attitudes
- (e) delight in language
- (f) increased ability to understand self and others.

(Boomer, 1984, p.5)

The aim of any literature program is to help students to develop and refine their responses, to find satisfaction in an extending variety of works and to cope with more demanding and complex ones. Unlike many other areas of study, the experience of literature is an activity that is only to a limited extent under teacher control. Teachers thus need to establish limits with other reading experiences outside of the teacher's control, and with film and television fiction. In practical terms this bridging may involve "the use of class libraries, encouraging the keeping of reading journals or simple lists of books read, regular discussions about reading with individuals or small groups, availability to talk about books in the library, systematic recommendations of particular novels, and sometimes a willingness to be "sidetracked" into discussion of last night's TV serial" (Protherough, 1983, p. 129).

To accomplish the development of interpretation and response Robert

Protherough (1983) describes six stages for the teacher of literature to follow, over different times scales according to the work or unit of study, and flexible so that the first or last stage may or may not be included. The stages lay stress on different responses in turn: personal enjoyment, perception, interpretation, and evaluation.

1. Possible pre-reading activities
  - themes or issues introduced before the story
  - creation of an appropriate atmosphere
  - establishing a context for the reading
  - links with previous reading
  - essential information (allusions, vocabulary) which students need before reading.
2. The first reading
  - read by teacher, recording, dramatic performance
  - excerpts or complete
  - edited or unexpurgated
3. Encouraging individual responses
  - relating to personal experiences, retelling, anecdotal parallels, selecting key passages
  - small groups, pairs
4. Developing and sharing responses
  - attention to aspects of the narrative (plot, character, mood, viewpoint, style)
  - extension to other media (art, drama, improvisation, recording)

5. Assessment and evaluation

- central issues on which judgement of the text will depend
- key questions to be asked about the text

6. Possible final readings or presentations

- bringing together group activities
- displays, performances, compilation

Classrooms for literature must be places of continuing and varied face to face exchanges, teacher to student, student to student, student to group. Group work and talk are essential elements in an effective classroom literature environment. The context of the small group offers an effective way of encouraging students to respond actively to literature. When students work together to present a piece of literature in some way, they generate new responses to the literature. Through the "experience of listening to the views of others about a poem, for example, students are encouraged to see new possibilities in meaning and, in this fairly private context, feel more confident of talking about their own ideas" (McGregor & Meiers, 1983, pp. 32-33).

We can create classroom environments and literature programs in harmony with Louise Rosenblatt's transactional response theory. This can happen when we:

- ask students what they know about reading literature
- ask them what happens as they read a text
- share what happens to us as teachers when reading the same text
- encourage students to ask questions about their reading

experiences with a particular text

- talk to each student about his/her reading experience
- let students talk to each other about their reading
- introduce students to the responses of more sophisticated readers. (Spiller, 1984, p. 24)

Literature and writing may be brought together in a response-centred curriculum, and the two may be harmoniously integrated given the broadened definition of literature offered in this monograph.

Literature is writing, and writing as a mode of response to literature is an outcome that has long been used by English teachers. Too often though the type of writing demanded of students has been in the expository and argumentative modes. The critical analysis paper, or writing about literature, has dominated response. What alternatives are there to the traditional essay? Can we have students writing literature rather than writing about literature?

A writing assignment may provide a natural follow-up to class discussion and/or debate, especially when the class is wrestling with a problem. The purpose in such writing is to try to resolve the problem. Writing assignments which grow out of actual problems and questions students have debated in class, and which are read and evaluated in class by peers, may become a means for students to express their interpretations to fellow readers and writers.

For literary works which seem far removed from students' life

experiences, an alternative approach to a teacher lecture on the author and the historical background to the text, is an opinionnaire activity. "This type of introductory activity is based on the idea that students have opinions about various subjects; it uses those opinions to create interest in a work and helps with problems students will encounter in trying to interpret complex implied relationships involving character, which students will have to write about" (Kahn, Walter & Johannessen, 1984, p. 22).

An opinionnaire may contain seven to twenty statements or questions, keyed to specific interpretative problems. Once students have completed it on their own, the teacher leads a class discussion focusing on each statement, and encourages students to express their own opinions and to challenge the opinions of others. Because the statements or questions require students to take a stand, this activity ensures a lively discussion. An excellent source of activities that meld reading of, writing about and talking about literature is the book by Kahn, Walter and Johannessen, 1984, entitled Writing About Literature.

Students' also can provide perspectives on the teaching of literature which may guide English/Language Arts teachers. Stephen Judy (1981, p. 176) reports briefly the results of a survey of middle school students in New York State reported originally in 1974. The researchers asked two questions: What has a teacher of yours done to interest you in reading? And what could a teacher of yours do to interest you in reading? The most frequent cited responses should be of interest to English teachers as they plan for teaching literature. They are:

1. Let us choose our own book.
2. Tell us interesting stories.
3. Show filmstrips or films(videos) about stories.
4. Let us act out exciting scenes from stories and plays.
5. Suggest names of interesting stories.
6. Let us read along with taped stories.
7. Play records (tapes) that tell stories.
8. Have free reading periods.
9. Assign creative projects, such as posters, collages, dioramas, and montages instead of book reports.
10. Have contests to see who reads the most books.
11. Assign different types of books.
12. Tell only the beginning of interesting stories.
13. Let us read comic books, magazines, and newspapers.
14. Have group discussions and panel discussions.
15. Let us tell the class about exciting books we have read.
16. Decorate the room with interesting posters, book displays, and students' projects relating to books.
17. Have a classroom library.
18. Prepare teacher and/or student annotated book lists.
19. Don't assign everyone the same book.
20. Let us read at our own pace.

#### THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER

In order to teach learners how to become  
better readers and writers of literature,

teachers need to practise it, demonstrate it and comment explicitly on how they do it themselves. This requires the ability to articulate the theories which derive their practice and furthermore the desire and the capacity to make these theories available to learners.

(Borner, 1984, p.7)

The role of the literature teacher who espouses a transactional, response-centred approach to the teaching of literature is very different from that of the literature teacher who perceives literature as a body of knowledge and approaches it as a treasured canon to be transmitted to students. It is the role of the response-centred teacher that is the focus of this subsection. The knowledge, abilities and attitudes required by such a teacher are discussed.

The response-centred teacher does not present literature to students; his or her responsibility is one of bringing the student and the book together and then to suggest, encourage and guide the student in his or her choice. Such a teacher cannot force the development of a sensitive awareness; he or she can help to increase the students' awareness of the importance of form, and of the range and power of language. This knowledge or awareness will encourage the student to seek out more demanding literature.



Knowledge

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), in its Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English and the Language Arts (1976), states that the teacher of literature needs to know an extensive body of literature in English, which includes literature for children and adolescents, popular literature, oral literature, nonwestern literature, and literature by women and minority groups. Added to this is knowledge varied ways of responding to, discussing, and understanding works of literature in all forms (p. 6).

The Canadian Council of Teachers of English (CCTE) has prepared a similar statement (1985). Under Reading/Literature Understanding these aspects are listed:

- roles of reading in learning
- processes by which students learn to read
- how students develop their reading abilities
- development of Canadian, English, and American literature
- characteristics of literary genres
- various theories of literary criticism
- backgrounds to literature (historical, biographical, mythical)
- theories of student response to literature.

Hook, Jacobs & Crisp (1970) are more specific, though their focus is definitely on the role of the high school teacher of literature. The teacher requires knowledge of the Bible as literature, of mythology (Greek, Roman, and Norse), of folklore (including riddles, songs, humour, language

play, tall tales), of theories of literary criticism, of the appeal of the media (television, radio, movies, newspapers, magazines, advertising) in order that he or she may learn something to make literature more appealing to more people.

The literature teacher requires knowledge much broader than that of literary works or theories of criticism. A teacher of literature should be aware of the various behavioural sciences and social sciences, especially anthropology, archaeology, psychology, sociology, history, political science, and classics. In order to understand literature and writers as part of its/their historical, cultural, and environmental settings the teacher needs to know what is happening in art, music, architecture, and science. "An understanding of the spirit of scientific method and its application to human affairs is the most fundamental social concept that the teacher of literature should possess" (Rosenblatt, 1976, p. 134).

### Abilities

Rosenblatt (1976) charges the teacher with responsibility for providing a wide selection of literature for students, and of helping students develop sufficient independence to seek out those works themselves. This responsibility requires the literature teacher to be aware of the conflicts and anxieties that recur most frequently among students in our society. Coupled with this ability is that of judging how students will respond to different works of literature, and helping them to develop the habit of reflecting upon their primary responses to books. The teacher seeks to create a situation in which students becomes aware of

possible alternative responses and are led to examine further their own reactions to the text itself (pp. 224-225).

This process of reflection leads the student to seek additional information concerning the work, the author, and their social setting, as a basis for understanding of himself and of literature. These new technical, personal, and social insights may ultimately lead to a revision of his original interpretation and judgement and may improve his equipment for future response to literature.

(Rosenblatt, 1976, p.225)

The NCTE Statement referred to earlier has English teachers requiring the ability to help students develop satisfying ways of responding to, and productive ways of talking about, works of literature, and of helping students develop the ability to respond appropriately to, and to create, nonprint and nonverbal forms of communication, including both symbolic forms and other visual and aural forms (including film, videotape, photography, dramatic performance, song, and other art forms) (1976, pp. 7-8).

The equivalent CCTE Statement (1935) mentioned previously is less traditional in its abilities requirements than it is for the knowledge requirements. Under Reading/Literature Abilities are listed:

- read and comprehend various types of materials
- help students become perceptive, critical, and independent

### readers

- help students develop their responses to literature
- recommend appropriate works of literature from many cultures and of children's and adolescent literature for individual reading
- assess students' reading ability and understanding of literature.

### Attitudes

Attitudes are deeply rooted and difficult to change, yet they are so influential on the types of knowledge and abilities that literature teachers hold and practise. James Squire (1968) reports that if any single reform is needed in English, it is the reintroduction of pleasure into what is done in the English period. He writes: "You need to be something of a scholar, to know your material, if you are to teach others; at the same time you must know how to keep your knowledge in the background, to come to the work in hand freshly, and to divine the minds of the students in class or group" (pp. 74-75).

Rosenblatt (1976) believes that literature teachers must be prepared to compare their responses to those of students, and be willing to see that a particular work may give rise to attitudes and judgements different from their own. Some interpretations are more defensible than others, and sometimes more than one reasonable interpretation is possible (pp. 78-79). The teacher, then, should not try to pose as a completely objective person, and should "avoid the insidious unconscious inculcation of dogma" (p.130).

Since the potential influence of English teachers are considerable,

they must be imbued with a reasoned approach to human personality and society, to be able to help students build the attitudes toward people that psychologists and others have demonstrated to be most constructive (p. 162). "He (the teacher) needs to create for himself a humane system of values and the flexibility to apply it under the complex and fluid conditions of contemporary life" (pp.275-276).

The literature teacher must constantly remain open to the possibilities of a text, since the aim of the response-centred approach is to help the student toward a more and more controlled, more and more valid or defensible response to the text. "The teacher of literature, especially, needs to keep alive this view of the literary work as personal evocation, the product of creative activity carried on by the reader under the guidance of the text" (p. 280).

Alan Purves, in the edited book How Porcupines Make Love: Notes on a Response-centred Curriculum (1972) succinctly puts the role of the teacher into a series of objectives which might serve for English teacher education:

The teacher must provide each student with as many different works as possible.

The teacher must encourage each student to respond as fully as he is able.

The teacher must encourage the student to understand why he responds as he does.

The teacher must encourage the student to respond to as many works as possible.

The teacher must encourage the student to tolerate responses that differ from his.

The teacher must encourage students to explore their areas of agreement and disagreement. (p. 37)

### EVALUATION

Teachers using a transactional, response-centred literature curriculum are faced with student evaluation as are all teachers of English and the Language Arts. But a response-centred approach and evaluation are not antithetical constructs. Students when responding to literature are going to be engaged in the four areas of language — reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These four areas are evaluated by English/Language Arts teachers at all levels of schooling.

Rejecting the notion of only one valid interpretation of a text and encouraging writers to experience the work for themselves, the teacher can still create a fair evaluation system. The teacher must, however, be alert to each reader's experience of the texts and try to gauge the extent of that reader's growth during the course. Spiller (1984) gives some ideas for evaluation in a response-centred literature program.

1. The teacher can institute a contract method of grading in which a set number of readings during the course would qualify the student for a particular grade. Each contract would require a specific

number of readings to be commented upon or a set percentage of the assigned readings for each grade would have to be responded to in a journal.

2. A variation to #1 would allow students to approach the journal when they want to, and they could realize that all reading does not have to result in written responses and evaluations.
3. The teacher might set a minimum number of readings for successful completion of the course with any beyond that number earning extra credit.
4. Using letter grades as examples, one grading system has students meet the following criteria. To earn a grade of
  - "C" the student would have to do the assigned reading, write the required journal entries, and come to scheduled conferences.
  - "B" all of the above and evidence of increased knowledge of the reading process.
  - "A" all of the above and evidence of relating the individual reading experiences to other concerns. (For instance, historical, generic, thematic, and/or critical.)

(Spiller, 1984, p. 30)

Other approaches to evaluation are offered by Stephen Judy (1982) in his textbook Exploration in the Teaching of English. First he presents variations on self-evaluation.

1. Matched Grades

The student and teacher make up grade recommendations independently and compare notes. If the grades match, all is well. For mismatches, a difference of opinion of one grade or more, a conference is held to settle the difference.

2. Conferences

The student and teacher meet to work out the grade. The student brings along samples of work for the course, and the two arrive at an evaluation.

3. Journal Evaluation

The student keeps a detailed log of accomplishments in the class, a kind of running record in support of a grade recommendation.

A fourth system described by Judy is a nongraded one which could be adapted to a graded system. At the end of a course or term, the teacher might file three items for each student:

1. A description of the course, its goals, and the kinds of experiences it provided.
2. A self-assessment of the student's work by the student (with/without grade).
3. An assessment of the student's work by the teacher (with/without grade).



The teacher and student meet in conference to discuss their assessments, and appropriate appeals could be made by the student or teacher if wide differences of perception exist.

Finally, CCTE released its Evaluation Policy for English in 1984; this deserves reading by all English/Language Arts teachers.

### LITERATURE IN THE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

When we consider literature in the larger context of curriculum it is necessary to consider curriculum models of English, and the roles played by those who establish curricula in the English/language arts, namely provincial departments of education. In this subsection discussion is focused on these issues, leading into consideration and analysis of the relationship between literature and curriculum specifically in the Canadian context.

### Content and Goals of a Literature Program

Any curricular discussion of literature and English should begin with the consideration of how literature and English are viewed, because this has direct implications for curriculum development in English. Traditionally, all subject areas are considered to have a body of knowledge, a content. Content probably implies explicit knowledge in systematic order, preplanned so that students progress through it from simplest to most complex levels. Literature has certainly been considered as content in the manner just described.

But in ordinary living no choice, decision or judgement is made without consideration of what we feel as well as what we know. Feelings are not organized in the same way as knowledge, and "as cognitive frames of reference are built up they have to be divorced and isolated from the influence of our desires and feelings about the world" (Dixon, 1975, p. 74). In defining a curriculum for English, Dixon (1975) sees a choice between (1) indicating broad areas of experience with which we are concerned, and (2) indicating the frames of reference that we expect to emerge. When we choose the first we are inevitably either general or vague in describing curriculum goals. "When we choose the second, we can be rather precise for some cognitive frames of reference, but at the expense of feeling and common sense, the kinds of knowledge that fit less well into the traditional form of curriculum guides" (p. 75).

By convention, a curriculum guide tends to be phrased in terms of the body of knowledge that are hoped for. This may tend to mislead English teachers into pressing for the body of knowledge at the expense of the rest of the process which includes areas of experience. The renowned Dartmouth seminar on English education in 1966 was largely responsible for initiating a shift from the knowledge perspective to the experience perspective, and the personal growth model of English stressing response to literature describes many English/language arts curricula today.

In the late 1960s 'themes' came to dominate the organization of literature in English curricula. These thematic schemes were very ambitious and very influential, and they did for a time convey a sense of the unity of English. But dissatisfaction grew as literature was

increasingly plundered for material to fit the theme. Low quality works began to be included because of relevance to the theme. Literature, in essence, had become a social document, subservient to the theme (Allen, 1980, pp. 46-49).

A parallel movement to create new unities can be seen in the attempts to integrate subjects in the curriculum. Integration had great influence on English curriculum development, with its inclination to extend the boundaries and break out of its socially-created limits. But literature again was subsumed as material for discussion of problems, human issues, human values, and so on (Allen, 1980, p. 40).

What curriculum models and approaches are extant in English curricula involving literature today? First it is necessary to distinguish between curriculum models and approaches. Models are theoretical constructs which, in the case of English/language arts curriculum development, provide ways of organizing the bodies of knowledge and/or areas of experience that are deemed to make up the discipline of English. Approaches are those ways of translating curriculum goals into pedagogical practices; they represent the ways in which curriculum developers, implementors, and teachers implement the English/language arts curriculum. At the core of curriculum development is a statement of goals.

Typical of many English curricula in the 1980s is a personal growth model with some aspects of a cultural heritage model in their inclusion of national or regional works of literature. The purpose of such a program is to foster the students' growth through literature by:

- extending experience beyond the physical limitations of their lives;
- stimulating a personal response to the content and language of the literature;
- exposing them to the vast number of concerns, viewpoints, and emotions that are a part of literature and life.

The literature program should challenge students to think critically and to evaluate a wide range of ideas, experiences, writing styles and language use. It should not serve to indoctrinate students into accepting any particular point of view.

Selection of literature must be addressed by a statement of goals. In a personal growth model few, if any, titles will be appropriate for all students. Selection of specific titles for use with specific classes must be done locally. The teacher, who is primarily responsible for selection, must consider:

- a) The age or grade level as it relates to the range of a student's reading abilities, interests and maturity;
- b) The teachability of the work - class study, group study, individual study;
- c) The literary quality, which should be as high as possible, but may vary due to other considerations;
- d) Community sensitivities as related to the content and the language use. Local choices should reflect local sensibilities.

By the time students have completed high school, they should have been exposed to a wide variety of literature:

- a) including a wide variety of genre and writing styles;
- b) maintaining a balance between Canadian literature and the literature of other cultures;
- c) maintaining a balance between literature of the present and that of the past;
- d) representing a wide range of content (ideas, opinions, experiences) in keeping with the interests and maturity levels of the students;
- e) maintaining a balanced perspective with respect to Canadian societal conditions, past and present. This balance should address such things as stereotyping, bias and prejudice.

(Much of the material above was taken or adapted from an article by Don C.Bewell [1981] describing the role of the Manitoba Department of Education in the literature selection process).

### English/Language Arts Curriculum Models

The three models (or images) of English/language arts curriculum described by Dixon (1975) live on in the 1980s as the dominant philosophies for English/language arts curriculum development - skills, cultural heritage, and personal growth. Although different descriptions may be given the models, the fundamental tenets of each hold firm.

A recent publication by the National Council of Teachers of English

(Mandel, 1980) superbly describes these. Three Language - Arts Curriculum Models is an edited book in which numerous experts were asked to submit articles describing either a process or student-centred model, a heritage or traditional model, and a competencies model. Each model is described in each of three levels - pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, the middle years school, and the high school. (The chapters extending the models through the community college and four-year college levels are ignored in the following description). Barrett J. Mandel, director of the 1978 and 1979 NCTE Committee on the English Curriculum and editor of the book, advises that the Committee decided to present three curriculum models rather than one curricular model for all, "each viewed as powerful and resourceful by its adherents, each used with varying degrees of success at the different instructional levels"(p. 3).

The discussion will treat each model in turn beginning with the first instructional level pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, then middle years, and finally high school. Only literature will be surveyed, though philosophical extensions to other areas of the language arts are often obvious.

The competencies model, based on behavioural studies, holds that a child matures in predictable and recognizable stages. The teacher introduces students to new knowledge and skills at the appropriate developmental moment and in amounts that are easily learned, or mastered. Mastery is an important aspect of the competencies approach. An assumption underlying this approach is that learning is incremental; children learn only what they can learn and only when they are ready, and mastery of one

skill readies a student for the next one. "Ideally, the competency-based approach enables the teacher to do three things effectively: diagnose, prescribe appropriate learning experiences, and evaluate" (Mason, Lundsteen, and Martinez, in Mandell [ed.], 1980, p. 23).

Literature is only mentioned at the high school instructional level where it is subsumed under reading skills. Students must recognize that there may be several themes that make up the meaning of a selection, recognize ways the author reveals theme and purpose, and determine what view of life or what comment on life is represented in the meaning of the selection (Clapp, in Mandel[ed], 1980, p. 14). If this model views literature as a reading skill, then literature must be a source of definable knowledge that is transmitted to students and observable in student behaviours immediately after the act of reading. Few English/Language Arts teachers would be overjoyed with this conception of literature or learning.

The process model "advocates the creation of an environment in which students can 'discover' what has heretofore been unknown to them" (Mandel, 1980, p. 7). Literature is unmentioned at the first instructional level. In the middle years students are encouraged to have three selections of literature available at all times: "mine", selected by the reader for whatever purpose deemed important; "yours", judged by the teacher, librarian, or parent to be of interest to the student; and "ours", the selection mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the student, parent and student, or student and student (Watson, in Mandel, 1980, p. 98).

There is a considerable role given literature at the high school level. Literature is viewed as relating to many adolescent concerns. The teacher can attempt to encourage students' naturally developing literary interests and aesthetic sense. Second, literature can be used to teach the identity and interpersonal skills needed for maturing adulthood. In a process curriculum the teacher listens carefully to students' own honest responses to literature and builds upon those by slowly introducing experiences to develop more mature intellectual skills. Literature is both enjoyed for itself and used to help young people achieve many of the developmental tasks of adolescence. "Advanced students can use literature to examine values and philosophies of life and their implications" (Stanford & Stanford, in Mandel [ed.], 1980, p. 152).

The heritage model focuses on traditions, history, and the time-honoured values of civilized thought and feeling. "For the heritage teacher, meaning in life comes from knowing who one is in relation to the societal, religious, moral, ethical, and aesthetic forces that characterize civilization at its best" (Mandel, 1980, p. 9). The culture that is passed on inspires through its literature.

Evertts (in Mandel, [ed.], 1980, pp. 35-36) argues that a heritage paradigm for the elementary school blends the development of communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) with a body of content (literature and language) while at the same time addressing itself to the communicative, personal, social, intellectual, and creative experiences of the child. Therefore, no predesigned book list will suffice. Literature is the central focus for oral communication, language growth and



development, and for the improvement of reading and writing skills. The elementary teacher begins with a number of suitable themes or topics for a class, and together the teacher and students investigate available resources. A planned literature program is essential; all genre should be included, as well as works from other cultures. Discussion provides an opportunity for students to respond to literature and evaluate the selection in terms of their own personal experience.

In the middle years (grades six through nine) books are the core of the heritage-based curriculum. The study of literature provides adolescents with access to the adult world into which they are emerging. Through literature young adults can begin to understand value systems other than their own, to see a world that is neither all good nor all bad, but with universal problems like those with which they are familiar. The teacher's aim should be to help students to acquire their own sense of appreciation of good literature by relying on their own judgement to help them choose the material they need. Appreciation of literature is a developmental process nurtured by exposure to a wide range of literary forms that capitalize on their interests (Hodges, in Mandel [ed.], 1980).

A rationale for a literary heritage paradigm in high school is that "if we can increase a student's historical sense through a heightened awareness of a connection to a literary heritage, we may also begin to expand that students' time sense into the future" (LaConte, in Mandel, 1980, p. 128). A heritage curriculum will be thematic in nature, and it will consider the themes of the literature of the past as inextricably connected to those of the literature of the present. A thematic approach

might be built on a thematic polarity, a pair of words or themes that attempt to delineate a range of human behaviour that has been of literary concern through the ages, such as an act of good or evil, loyalty and treachery. Having established the polarity and posed some thematic questions, the teacher and students can begin to identify appropriate literature. A simple organizing framework is to create a three-tiered structure of past, present, and future, and to cluster selections accordingly.

Both Everetts and La Conte (in Mandel, 1980) are critical of past approaches to the heritage model. First, curriculum designers have given literature too dominant a role at the expense of the other language skills. Also, the study of literature in the schools has dealt with established cultural values and interpretations of life, which were treated as fairly fixed, ignoring the backgrounds and personal responses of students to the present world. At the high school level in particular literary heritage has been used as a synonym for literary history; literature has been reduced to an artifact.

Largely in response to these criticisms of the heritage model, Alan Purves (1972) developed the response - centred curriculum. (The response philosophy has been further refined in the excellent book The Reader, the Text, the Poem by Louise M. Rosenblatt (1978)). For Purves at the centre of the curriculum are not the works of literature but the response, the mind as it meets the book. Purves assigns teachers of a response-centred curriculum quite a different role to that of the literature teacher.

The teacher must:

- (1) provide each student with as many different works as possible.
- (2) encourage each student to respond as fully as he or she is able.
- (3) encourage the student to understand why he or she responds as he or she does.
- (4) encourage the student to respond to as many works as possible.
- (5) encourage the student to tolerate responses that differ from his.
- (6) encourage students to explore their areas of agreement and disagreement.

"Although works are unique and people are unique and responses are unique, there are points where responses touch and overlap. The following are three points of agreement:

If everybody in a group is responding to the same poem, the common point is the poem.

If a person is responding to a poem, a play, and a novel, the common point is the person.

If a group of people is talking about novels they have read, the common point is the language they are using to talk with" (Purves, 1972, p. 39).

Purves describes how literature can be selected for a response-centred curriculum. Works tend to be arranged in a rough sequence of difficulty. This sequence has four aspects.

1. Content  
Some works deal with more complex issues than do others,

more complex emotions or relationships than do others, experiences more remote from those of most people than do others, or more abstract ideas than do others.

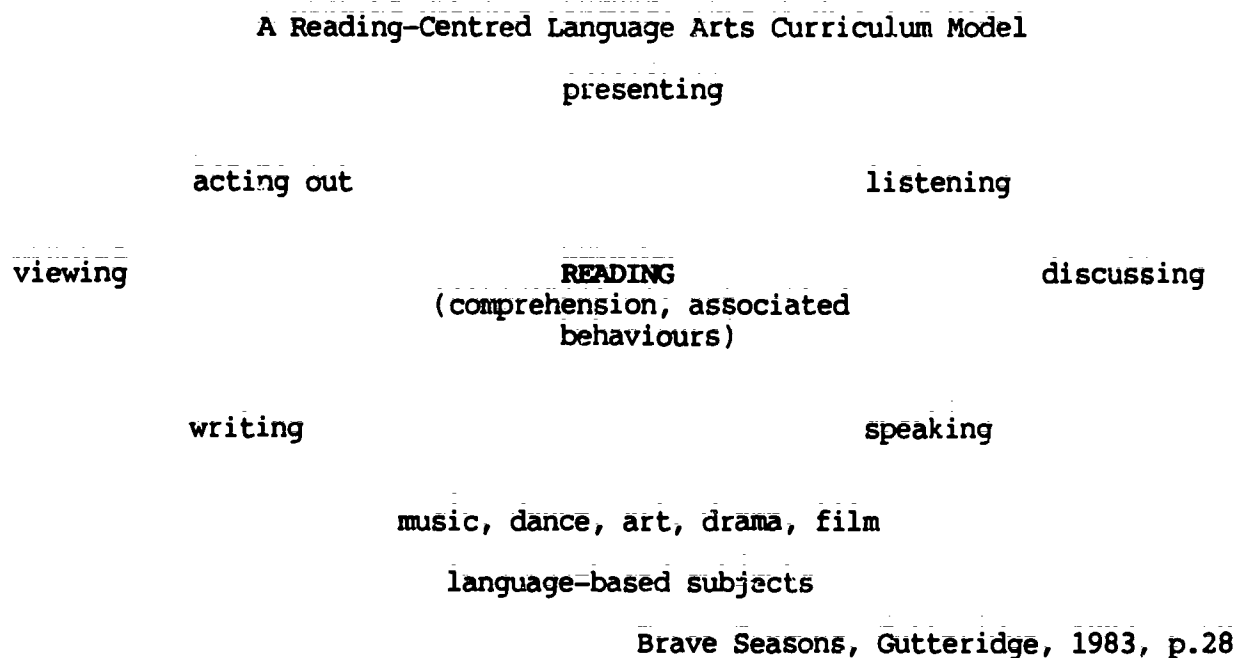
2. **Voice**  
Some works are relatively clear in that one is able to determine who is talking and what his attitude towards the subject matter, the audience, or himself is; what his tone is; or what sort of a mood he seems to evoke. Others have a variety of voices, some of which a reader can trust, others of which he cannot.
3. **Language**  
Some works use more highly complex syntax; some use many allusions; some build pun upon pun; some are highly metaphoric or imagistic.
4. **Shape**  
Some works use a clearer visual organization than others; some works have more complex sound patterns than others; some works have more complex plot or organization than others.  
(Purves, 1972, p. 192)

Purves suggests that by using content, voice, language, and shape as guides for organizing English curriculum, one can construct a curriculum that goes from relatively more simple to relatively more difficult works. "Thus, we can say that achievement in the curriculum is defined as facility and success of response to the next selection the student is exposed to" (1972, p. 193).

Don Gutteridge (1983) proposes a reading-centred language arts curriculum model that covers kindergarten through grade ten. The model is presented in Figure 3.

With reading placed at the centre throughout the continuum K-10 one has principally to define the developmental stages which govern the progress of reading, since Gutteridge believes that writing, discussing, presenting, and other operations will be governed largely by reading in terms of purpose,

FIGURE 3



content, structure, and degree of difficulty. Gutteridge argues that reading comprehension holds out "the promise of being the crucial factor in language development after age six" (1983, p. 24). One senses that Gutteridge's model is not unlike the Purves response-centred curriculum.

Teachers need to make significant curricular discriminations between possible works of literature, as well as critical ones. Some of these discriminations are proffered by Protherough (1983) as follows:

- (1) Some books provide an enjoyable group experience, something which can be shared and discussed. Others are inherently more personal and better suited to private reading.
- (2) The topics and themes of some books are more obviously 'relevant' than those of others, either because they are concerned with

experiences and ideas common in the class at the time, or because they can be related to work being done in other areas of the curriculum, or because they focus on the topic which is currently linking a number of lessons.

- (3) In a class with homogenous and average or greater ability, some works may be too difficult or sophisticated in a literary sense, even with editing, to enable the students to share the experience of reading together. (p. 154)

Discrimination involving issues such as the above will influence, and be influenced by, the approaches taken by various English/Language Arts teachers. Protherough (1983, pp. 172-173) goes on to give some general principles for incorporating literature in the work of a class. First, a novel can be used as a core reader, from which all English activities arise. Second, a particular theme can be used as the core for English work. Third, a selected genre or style (for example, the gothic story) can be the basis for reading, writing, and other activities. Fourth, the teacher can deliberately balance a literature program against a thematic structure to provide variety. And fifth, the teacher can combine a structured course in close reading with periods of silent, individual reading of works chosen by pupils from a class collection.

Hook and Evans (1982) provide a North American (United States) approach to the arranging of literature. Four principles of arrangement are described - chronological order, types of literature, central themes, and students' experiences. Hook and Evans state that arrangements around themes, topics, and student experiences have been found most satisfactory

in grades seven through ten. Arrangements by types or chronology seem better suited to the eleventh and twelfth grades (p. 145).

Hook and Evans then describe the six basic approaches in widest use at the present time.

- (1) The historical approach emphasizes the biography of the writer and the literary and historical events of the age in which he or she lived. The rationale is that "a confrontation with human issues in literature of the past can help students to grapple with human problems today" (p. 148).
- (2) In the sociopsychological approach "the teacher attempts to help students increase their knowledge of people, add to their understanding of the age in which literature was written, and apply this knowledge and understanding to current living" (p. 148).
- (3) Personal growth, experience, discovery, engagement-involvement, personal response, and transaction are all terms to describe the philosophy of the personal approach. Literature can be used to teach the identity and interpersonal skills needed for mature adulthood.
- (4) The value seeking approach overlaps the personal approach, especially in its emphasis on experience and personal growth. This approach has students assess themselves and their own values, individually and collectively in relation to the larger society and its values as reflected in the literature and its language,

particularly its public language.

- (5) The cognitive approach is a meaning-seeking one. Its purpose is to uncover the exact meaning lurking behind the author's language. The cognitive approach teacher views a work as a literary object to be studied carefully for its meaning. This approach concentrates more on the text as object than on the student as reader. "The approach does not seek to evolve a personal response from the reader, but it does seek understanding" (p. 150).
- (6) The analytical approach involves examining the ideas, imagery, mechanics, and the tone of writing in order to discover what each contributes to the total work. Through this approach it is hoped that students will discover that good literature does not just happen but results from careful planning, selection, and workmanship. In this approach attention is definitely on the text; it gives least recognition and credit to students' personal responses.

### Canadian Literature in the Curriculum

My argument is that the central issue is not whether or not Canadian literature should be taught in English/language arts classes, but rather when should it be introduced, how should it be treated, and what proportion of the literature curriculum should it comprise. That Canadian literature has a definite contribution to make in an English/language arts curriculum is evident in a statement from the Ministry of Education,



Ontario in Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division, English,  
1977:

Literature in the Canadian context is especially powerful, for it embraces the heritage of both traditional and contemporary English literature, the rich mythology and literature of the native peoples, the emotive literature that arises from the pioneer and immigrant experiences, with the additional enrichment of translations from the many cultures that comprise the Canadian mosaic. It can lead to increased understanding between our many peoples and a deeper appreciation of each other's cultural experience. (p. 3)

Gutteridge (1978) would argue that Canadian literature be introduced in grade seven through a unit approach. He proposes three instructional level "models" beginning with the Language Arts model suited to grades seven through ten. It is a cross-disciplinary approach stressing language experience where the classroom, the teacher, and the text are starting points for an exploration of students' personal and social realities through the medium of language and its related forms.

The Thematic model is for grade eleven and twelve. Thematic organization differs from the generic in that certain themes (the land, growing up) are defined a priori to serve as criteria for selecting materials and as a focal point for analysis, discussion and further study.

The Generic model is an academic one for grades twelve and thirteen (Ontario). "The rationale for treating the genres in self-contained units is that questions of form and rhetorical design can be dealt with in a focused and sustained manner" (p. 11). All these approaches are developed through units in which students examine the cultural conflict of Canadian literature.

Underhill (1977) proposes a cultural approach to Canadian literature in the high school (grades ten through twelve). The purpose of the cultural approach is to examine the specific piece of literature in the context of its cultural background. In arguing this approach Underhill declares that "much of our culture is remembered through our literature" (p. 5). Literature can be read to reveal something of the problems of man, in time, in Canada. Underhill brings to his argument the words of scholars such as Ramsey Cook and Northrop Frye. Literature affords us another way of looking at where we have been, what we have done, and where we might go.

#### A SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE IN CANADIAN CURRICULA

Any discussion of English/language arts curricula in Canada would be seriously remiss without an analysis of current English/language arts curriculum guides in use in the provinces. This subsection reviews selected English and language arts curriculum guides from five provinces - British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. These provinces were selected because they are the more populous Canadian provinces, and all curricula reviewed are of recent vintage (since 1975). The focus of discussion on selected provincial English/language arts

curricula is literature. The curricula discussed should not be construed as being my tacit judgement as the best curricula in terms of literature, though in places in the discussion recommendations are made pertaining to particular provincial curriculum documents.

The discussion is organized by issues and within each issue application at either one or more of three levels - elementary, middle years/junior high school/intermediate/Division III, and secondary/high school. These terms cover the various terminology used. The elementary years typically cover either kindergarten through grade six or grades one through six. The middle years/junior high school/intermediate/Division III years cover grades seven through either nine (Division III) or ten (intermediate). The high school years cover grades ten (eleven in Ontario) to grade twelve inclusive (grade thirteen in Ontario).

### Rationales

The Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) demands a planned literature program as an integral part of an integrated language arts curriculum. It states that elementary children should have access to books which represent variety in genre and theme and which appeal to a wide range of interests and reading abilities. Seven categories of literature necessary to an elementary school program are: picture books and picture story books; poetry; folktales, fairy tales, myths, legends and fables; fantasy; historical stories; realistic stories; and informational literature (including biography) (pp. 44-50).

A high school rationale can be found in the Saskatchewan Division Four Curriculum Guide (English 10,20,30; 1975). Four reasons are given for the study of literature. First is enjoyment: reading is a source of lifelong pleasure. Second is appreciation: the ability to appreciate can be acquired. "Appreciation, both present and future, can be enhanced by an analysis of those elements that synthesize to produce the finished work. Over-analysis may hinder appreciation, but the corrective does not lie in non-analysis" (p.16). Each student, at his or her own level of literary sophistication, can be led to appreciate the qualities of literature which are listed as style, force, emotional appeal, and subtlety. Third is philosophical concerns: "literature asks the kind of ultimate questions that every individual must ultimately ask - Who am I? Why am I here? What do I want? Where am I going?" (p. 17). Also, literature explores ideas without establishing firm standards. Rather, literature reveals the conflicts that surround ideas: "In many ways the study of literature is amoral." (p. 17) Fourth, the wide reaching of literature is one of the best ways of enabling students to develop styles of their own.

### Objectives

The Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) provides charts for each grade one through six which list content and skills. Grade one pupils should identify different forms of literature (animal stories, stories about real people, fairy tales, and fantasies). They should also read stories, poems and picture books. In grade two, autobiographies are added to identification of forms of literature. Third grade children should demonstrate desire to read and to view for recreation

and information. They should understand the role of reader/writer, and identify and respond to different types and forms of literature and elements of the writer's craft. Plays are added to the genre. In fourth grade children should be able to demonstrate understanding of author's style and structure (by oral reading, role-play, mime, etc), and be able to select materials appropriate to an audience. The genre are expanded to include fairy tales, tall tales, animal stories, biographies, autobiographies, poetry and plays.

In fifth grade, in addition to all the above, the child should read increasingly complex material critically to evaluate or judge ideas:

- discriminating fact from opinion, fiction from non-fiction
- detecting absurdities, humour
- determining feelings and attitudes.

Also, the child should identify and respond to different types and forms of literature (e.g. myths, science fiction) and elements of writer's craft (e.g. mood, theme). Myth, legend, and fable are added genres.

In sixth grade the student, in addition, should be able to determine an author's purpose, and analyze and appreciate point of view. Critically, the sixth grader should detect prejudice and bias, and make judgements as to worth and acceptability. Genre added are historical fiction, free verse, concrete poetry, cinquain, diamanti, haiku, jingle, rhyming couplet, limerick, and quatrain.

The Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide of British Columbia (1978) includes "the study and appreciation of literature" (p. 9) as one of

three interrelated components of the language arts program. Accordingly, one of the three basic aims of the language arts program is "to develop an appreciation and a knowledge of literature" (p.9). The basic principles of the literature program are covered in Goals 22,23, and 24 (pp. 51-53).

"The purpose of the literature program is to develop the student's capacity for continuing involvement with literature as a significant and rewarding experience. Through literature, the student can broaden his/her experiences, weigh personal values against those of others, become fully appreciative of the past, sensitive to the present, and inquisitive about the future" (p.51).

In the Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division, English (1977) the specific objectives are threefold: (1) The student should experience literature by listening to the oral forms of literature, reading literature, and watching performances, live or recorded, of literary works; (2) The student should be encouraged to respond to literature emotionally, creatively, and reflectively. This includes interpreting a work of literature by enacting it or recreating it in another form, and attempting to create literature through writing. (3) The student should be encouraged to value literature, recognizing that literature transmits and sustains the values of the culture (p.82).

The cultural heritage and personal growth models form the basis of the objectives of the Ontario Curriculum Guide for the Senior Division, English (1977). Specifically the objectives are:

- (1) derive enjoyment from literature and language;
- (2) develop discrimination and literary judgement through

- extensive reading of literature, both past and present;
- (3) deepen emotional sensitivity to the rhythms, patterns, moods, and visions of literary works;
- (4) develop understanding of life, identity, purpose, and self-worth through the study of language and literature;
- (5) understand Canada's broad cultural heritage, and peoples belonging to social and cultural groups other than their own;
- (6) use language and literature to explore intellectual, moral, and social values;
- (7) value the power of literature and language in providing vicarious experiences;
- (8) conceive of learning as a lifelong experience in which language and literature play a major part (p.9).

Personal response, sharing of responses with others orally or in writing, and personal, social or critical evaluation, where appropriate, characterize the objectives of the Alberta Senior High School Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1982). Lifelong application of language skills is applied to literature and the media through the philosophic statement "discriminating enjoyment of literature, live theatre, public speaking, filming and other mass media can lead to an enriched use of leisure time" (p.4). Slightly different objectives apply to both the academic stream and the vocational stream.

### Types

The Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) is quite explicit in the types of literature considered appropriate for the

elementary years. (See Objectives above). The British Columbia Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) is less specific, though it does include dramatization, music and dance, art, and oral and written expression as activities through which students respond creatively to literature. It is also stated that students experience literature through listening, speaking, reading, and writing (p.53).

The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division, English (1977) is guided by the assumption that "most people subscribe to a view of literature as writing that bears and merits in-depth study; in other words, it advocates exposure to writing that, in form and substance, presents to the student a model of excellence that he can perceive as desirable, fulfilling, exciting, and meaningful" (p.80).

The Saskatchewan Division III English: Handbook to Developmental Reading and Literature (1978) makes mention of the genres: short stories, myth, drama, poetry, nonfiction and novels. The Saskatchewan Division IV Curriculum Guide (English 10,20,30; 1975) includes poems, novels, a Shakespearean play at each of grades ten through twelve, modern plays, short stories, essays, and non-fiction books.

The Ontario Senior Division English Curriculum Guideline (1977) includes as literature the short story, and radio, television, and film script based on the short story, newspaper editorial, essay, professionally-written report, myth, short poetic form such as the Japanese haiku or tanku, sonnet, published book reviews, modern plays, business letters, fairy tales (also ones written by students), suspense stories, short plays,



professionally-written character sketches, printed material pertaining to selected occupations and satire written by professional writers.

### Canadian Literature

In elementary language arts curricula literature, when discussed, is not divided into genre or nationality, but genres and other divisions of literature begin to appear in the junior high school or middle years/intermediate years. The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division, English (1977) contains eleven units under the rubric Action and Adventure. Each of the units contains a table of contents, introduction, list of general aims, a long list (at times subdivided) of recommended materials, and a bibliography. The units are: (1) Growing up; (2) Violent Encounters; (3) Historical Adventures; (4) Frontiers; (5) Native Peoples; (6) Folk Tales; (7) Animals; (8) Winter Brutality; (9) Sports; (10) Mystery and the Supernatural; and (11) Science Fiction.

The Saskatchewan Division III English: Handbook to Developmental Reading and Literature (1978) contains a category at the grade nine level for Canadian literature. Anthologies are used for much of the selection of grade seven and eight literature also. Selection at these two grades are primarily short stories, poetry, and legends, including Indian legends, and novels.

The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Senior Division, English (1977) does not mandate Canadian literature in the mandatory credit courses

in English nor the second credit non-mandatory courses in English, though it does state that some literature should be Canadian. The honour graduation year (Grade 13) program does include Canadian literature, both past and present; in fact the statement reads that "Canadian authors should be well represented" (p.13).

The Saskatchewan Division Four English (English 10,20,30) Curriculum Guide's (1975) most obvious feature at the Grade XII level is that it divides material according to nationality — British, American, and Canadian. British literature is used as the core for the first half of the Grade XII English course, the second half being about equally divided between American and Canadian literature.

In Alberta each year of the senior high school program for English must contain a certain percentage of Canadian literature. In the diploma or vocational stream, each of grades ten, eleven and twelve must have one-third Canadian content. In the academic stream grade ten must contain one-quarter Canadian content, grade eleven one-half, and grade twelve one-quarter. (Alberta Senior High School Language Arts Curriculum Guide, 1982, p.32)

### Organization

The British Columbia Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) is organized by goals with literature governed by three goals. Goal #22 states that the student should develop an appreciation of literature; Goal #23 would have the student develop the ability to understand various aspects of literature; Goal #24 states that "the Language Arts Program

should enable the student to experience literature in a variety of forms and from a variety of cultures" (p.50). Teaching strategies and types of literature are suggested, but literature is subsumed under Communication Skills and the following statement is provided in the Language Arts scope and Sequence charts:

As the student experiences literature and language and studies the content, he/she receives and expresses information through the use of the communication skills. Literature and language, therefore, provide the foundation for the development of effective communication.

The Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) organizes literature under Reading and Viewing in Content and Skills charts for each of the grades one through six. (A description of this sequential organization has already been provided in Objectives.)

The most comprehensive statement on literature in the elementary school is to be found in Teaching Guide No. 24 from the Nova Scotia Department of Education (1978). Entitled Literature in the Elementary School it defines literature, provides a general statement of principles, goals and objectives, an overview of the literature program, a listing of reading skills and literary abilities, ways of sharing literature experiences with children, a rationale for teaching literature (including traditional literature), using literature with children (good and bad practices), and evaluation.

The Saskatchewan Division III English: Handbook to Developmental Reading and Literature (1978) concentrates on developmental reading in years seven and eight in "response to concern in the province to produce students in Division III who have a good command of the skills of English. To facilitate the emphasis, the teaching of developmental reading in Year 7 and 8 has been given priority over the teaching of literature" (p.32).

Three options are provided for teachers. One concentrates on structured reading experiences, one on the use of literature textbooks for teachers who are concerned about teaching the literary heritage, and a locally developed option in which teachers combine various materials to build a reading and literature program. In Year 9 the literature program is organized around genres "to prepare students specifically for the kind of program developed in Division IV" (p.37).

In Ontario the Intermediate Division English Curriculum Guideline (1977) groups literature by genre and author under three headings. The core consists mostly of novels suitable for intensive study by the whole class under detailed teacher direction. The complementary group complements the core and can be used in a variety of ways. The supplementary group is intended for reference.

Intensive and extensive study of literature is used in the Saskatchewan and Ontario junior high school and high school curricula. Intensive study means that considerable time is spent in class on the study of a selection with students working under comparatively close teacher direction. Extensive study may be done mainly out of class by individuals

or small groups. Work is directed by the teacher but not as closely as for intensive portions of the course. Extensive study might lead to such in-class activities as small group discussions and oral reports.

In the Saskatchewan Division Four English (English 10,20,30) Curriculum Guide (1975) the basis of organization at each level is as follows:

Grade X:     Man Looks Outward

Grade XI:    Man Looks Inward

Grade XII:   The Ways in Which Man Sees Himself and His World

At each level the program is carried out both intensively and extensively with about equal treatment accorded to each. There is further sub-division of each level into themes and sub-themes, and into modes in Grade XII.

The four general themes under the main Grade X topic "Man and Society" are (1) The Unknown, (2) Adventure and Courage, (3) Social Tensions, and (4) Environment. The themes and sub-themes of "Man and Himself" (Grade XI) are:

1.     Childhood (Growing up; Love; Moments of Wonder; Clarity of Vision; Friendship)
2.     Youth (Education; Search for identity; Love; Joy; Beauty; Responsibility; Sorrow; Insights)
3.     Maturity (Marriage; Parenthood; Careers; Love; Sensitivity; Search for Values)
4.     Age (Nostalgia; Love; Death; Dislocation; Contentment)

The Grade XII course is organized in a more traditionally "literary" fashion: by nationality, by chronology, by mode. The modes are

the Tragic Mode, The Comic Mode, The Romantic Mode, The Ironic Mode, The Philosophic Mode, and The Expository Mode. (pp.18-22)

In Alberta the two-stream concept is used for English study - an academic stream, and a diploma or vocational stream. Several organizational approaches are detailed from which teachers may choose to plan integrated units. (1) An integrated language-based approach might be developed around the principle that language varies according to audience and purpose. (2) In the student experience approach the teacher begins with subjects and themes generated by the students and then provides experiences to talk, read, write, listen and view material related to the topic. (3) A skills approach might focus on a skill such as main idea. (4) A genre approach focuses on literary theory and analysis of selected works within a genre. (5) A chronological organization approach, either within one genre or across genres, provides the opportunity for students to learn about how literature develops from the society in which it is produced, and about how literature influences other literature. (6) A thematic approach provides opportunities for comparisons between writers and across genres (pp.65-66).

The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Senior Division English (1977) provides for mandatory credit courses in English over grades eleven and twelve with requirements of five genre (novels, short stories, essays and other prose, poetry and play). In addition there are second credit non-mandatory English courses which include the study of literature and language as used in the media such as films, television, radio, tape recordings, records, magazines and newspapers. Also included is intensive study of a single literary genre, such as drama or poetry, and a course on

a special topic such as women in literature, heroism, youth and age, satire in literature and the media, children's literature, and Canadian literature. In grade 13 (university preparation) the English course must include the study of a minimum of three of the five genres previously mentioned. Intensive and extensive study is part of the Grade 13 course.

### The Role of the Teacher

What roles are specified in curricula for the English/language arts teacher? The British Columbia Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) provides definite guidelines for the teacher. The teacher should:

- encourage the student to talk about his/her experiences as they relate to the selection;
- discuss the words, phrases and imagery of the author;
- read stories and poems to children;
- encourage choral reading, the retelling of stories, the dramatization of stories, the sharing of books, and the frequent use of school and public libraries;
- encourage storytelling, through having students describe, and repeat memorized stories;
- provide opportunities for the student to read poetry, stories and plays aloud;
- encourage the dramatization of poetry and prose through pantomimes, improvised creative dramatics, puppetry, picture stories and rehearsed theatre;
- increase the student's appreciation of literature through individual and classroom discussions of theme, plot, characterization, setting and

style. (pp.51-52)

At the junior high school level the Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division (1977) provides specific strategies for using literature under the headings of the novel, the short story, poetry, plays, non-fiction, film and television, and the thematic approach (pp.84-98).

At the high school level the Alberta Senior High School Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1982) provides guidelines for the role of the English teacher centred on student response. Teachers are to provide varied opportunities for response through full class discussion, small group discussion, teacher-pupil conferences, oral and written reports. Articulation of personal responses is encouraged, and reader's theatre is promoted (pp.70-74).

### Response

Response to literature is openly encouraged in both the Alberta Elementary Language Arts (1978) and Senior High School Language Arts (1982) curriculum guides. In both guides this response-centred approach includes the integration of other language arts in expression of response - discussion, writing, dramatization, pantomime - and through other media such as art. In the Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide classroom activities are given which will help improve the quality of children's response to what they read. Selection becomes a part of the response process also: "exposure to a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, and traditional and modern literature provides opportunities to



discover and explore new interests" (p.52).

Response to reading is given considerable attention in the Senior High School Language Arts Curriculum Guide. Response is considered from the perspective of three variables - the reader, the text, the situation of reading. A distinction is made between personal and critical response, and developmental stages in the formulation of response are given, using Applebee's (1978) research. The transactional approach to response developed by Rosenblatt (1978) permeates this guide.

### Integration

The integration of literature with the other language arts is dealt with in most English/language arts curricula. The British Columbia Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) includes an integrated approach as a basic principle: "literature, language and communication should be given full attention in an integrated language arts program" (p.9). This philosophy is carried through in the roles described for the language arts teacher dealing with literature described previously (The Role of the Teacher). The Alberta Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1978) develops an integrated philosophy and links literature with children's language development, describes literature as a model for creative expression, and extends literature beyond language arts to all areas of the curriculum (p.54).

Integration at the junior high school level is described by the Ontario Curriculum for the Intermediate Division English (1977):

literature should be a stimulus for a wide variety of language activities. "The integration of literature into the total language program should be achieved through the student's oral and written responses to what he reads — reports, discussions, written reactions, invitations" (p.21). This statement appears in the evaluation section of the guide, suggesting that the English teacher should evaluate students' responses through the other language arts.

It seems as though an orientation towards student response to literature fits naturally with a philosophy of integration. The Saskatchewan Division III English Curriculum Guide (1978) suggests that integration takes place through oral and written responses to literature, thematic units, genre units, media units, units for cross-strand instruction in specific skills, and special events (pp 22-24).

At the high school level integration has not been traditionally a priority. The usual high school English curriculum has treated language/grammar and/or composition separately from literature. The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Senior Division English (1977) suggests practical lesson units through which literature, language study, and writing may be integrated. Suggestions are also provided for evaluation which provide assistance to the teacher in planning integrated approaches to the improvement of students' work (pp. 1-18).

### Media

There is increasing tendency in English/language arts curricula to

include other media along with written literature. The position taken here is that media which includes film, video, tape recordings, records, filmstrips, and so on are ways of presenting interpreted literature whereas written literature and the oral tradition in written form represent literature to be interpreted by the reader/listener.

The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division English (1977) includes as one of its objectives that students "conceive of learning as a lifelong experience in which language and literature regardless of the medium through which they are presented (print, film, television) play a major part" (p.13). The Ontario Curriculum Guideline for the Senior Division English (1977) includes units on the media in the mandatory credit courses program, but it is in the second credit non-mandatory course that "the study of literature and language as used in the media such as film, television, radio, tape recordings, records, magazines, and newspapers" (p.12) is treated as a whole. Also in this program are elective courses on satire in literature and the media.

The Saskatchewan Division Four English 10,20,30 Curriculum Guide (1975) contains a section on the media. It's opening statement on p.180 reads:

Many teachers are understandably confused about the role that films, records, radio, and television play in an English course. At one extreme are those teachers who would reject the acted version of a play as being "entertainment" rather than

"classroom literature". At the other extreme are those teachers who would accept almost any work as "literature" as long as it appears in the currently fashionable medium.

The Saskatchewan curriculum then takes the position that "the study of English is the study of language. The study of literature is the study of language used at its highest level" (p.180). It goes on to state that the use of films or television programs and so on therefore "should be devoted to the study of language - how language has been used effectively by professional writers, and how it can be used effectively by student writers" (p.180). Further, these media forms should "be used as aids to the better understanding of literature and language rather than as self-sufficient areas of study" (p.180). Teachers in standard - as opposed to vocational or business - English courses are urged "to concentrate on language itself rather than on the medium that carries the language" (p.180).

The Saskatchewan curriculum does recognize that students will probably not study in detail the technical aspects of the various media, but that they should develop some awareness of the impact of the media on their lives. Therefore it recommends that if English teachers with the time and ability do accept some responsibility for study of the media per se, they adopt the following division to avoid repetition and duplication:

Grade X - periodicals, records, tapes

Grade XI - radio, television

Grade XII - motion picture, newspaper. (p.180)

Evaluation

Ontario has an English Intermediate Division curriculum support document entitled Evaluation and the English Program (1979) with a section devoted to responding to literature. Since the Curriculum Guideline for the Intermediate Division, English aims at development of a positive student attitude and response, then students' active engagement in listening, speaking, viewing, acting, reading, and writing activities, individually and in groups, should be observed and recorded for evaluative purposes. Students should be encouraged to trace their own progress, and assessment strategies may include checklists, inventories, questionnaires, and rating scales for use both by the teacher and students.

The Ontario Senior Division English Curriculum Guide (1977) contains an extensive section on evaluation but it is restricted to the evaluation of writing, using a variety of methods, and of the English program. The Alberta Senior High School Language Arts Curriculum Guide (1982) contains a small section on evaluation of reading/literature. These ideas comprise tasks which the teacher can assign students for evaluative purposes.

Overview

In 1981 the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, published a report of its Curriculum Committee on a survey of provincial English/language arts curricula at the elementary and secondary levels. The aspects of that report dealing with literature are the focus here.

In the early years (grades 1-6, ages 6-12) literature is introduced through: the published programs; additional materials selected by the teacher; and student selected recreational reading. Nova Scotia and Quebec provide a separate document which deals with literature at the elementary level. All provinces promote the reading of a variety of literature but leave the details to teachers (p.3).

During the adolescent years (grades 7-9, ages 12-15) all curricula include literature which incorporates the major literary genres; all at least refer to the desirability of including the non-print media. "Grouping literature in terms of genre is still the most common organizational system but thematic organization is becoming more evident,..." (p.5).

At the senior years (grades 10-12, ages 16-18) all provinces deal with literature, drama, media, reading, writing and oral-aural language in some form of integrated program or programs. There is generally an increased interest in Canadian literature. Several provinces (Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan) have incorporated Canadian literature into the core program(s); at least one province (Manitoba) in its Interim 1981 curriculum had optional Canadian literature units which teachers are encouraged to use as a part of the regular programs. "It is rather obvious that the differences between placing particular content in core as opposed to making it optional will have a significant effect on the final outcome" (p.5).

Under "Trends" the following were noted from K-12:

1. A marked increase in the variety and range of materials (print and

- non-print) used in English/language arts instruction;
2. An integrated philosophy;
  3. "The teaching of literature is changing from the placing of heavy emphasis on form and structure to a greater consideration of live experience, emotional impact, and as a model of effective language" (p.7);
  4. Teachers are assigning more importance to drama, dance, mime, puppetry, creative unscripted drama, student created scripted drama, theatre, plays written for radio, television, and for live drama;
  5. "Canadian nationalism is reflected in a preference for Canadian materials. Provincial literature is also favoured. There has been a definite improvement in quality and quantity of Canadian adolescent material" (p.7).

Finally, under "Current Issues": the following statement appears:

Classroom materials (particularly literature) and the criteria of materials selection are under examination by a variety of groups and individuals across the country. This issue requires serious consideration. Criteria of selection must be rationalized to give maximum support to the achievement of the language arts goal (p.8).

## CONCLUSION

One reason for arguing for the alignment of literature with the humanities is that literature teaching in the 1980s is in a state of siege and transition. Siege has been mounted by some members of the public, by the business community, and by governments. With permanent unemployment and increasing demand for specialists in computer and technological fields, attention paid to literature study in English curricula is often considered irrelevant and/or impractical. Students with career potential in mind do not often see the value of a study of literature.

Transition has come about partly as a result of the state of siege. Teachers of English have not responded adequately to the transformation of the whole structure of society. With increased participation in high school education and university education student populations differ so substantially in social composition from those of twenty years ago that literature curricula and selection have often not kept pace. Feminism, minority group rights, increased emphasis on multiculturalism, current debate on homosexuality, prostitution, pornography, even Star Wars, are all issues that are often neglected when it comes to selection of literature and response to literature in literature programs.

English/Language Arts in the 1980s needs to develop an eclecticism towards literature teaching. This eclecticism needs to be manifest in a variety of ways. First, a realization that no one theory of teaching literature or response to literature is appropriate will radically change the concept of what constitutes literature. K.K. Ruthven (1979) states the



potential of this theoretical shift:

...if all theories are possible (and capable of various permutations with one another) then the whole of literature becomes available to us as a galaxy of possibilities: there can be no dead issues, obsolete forms, unfashionable authors, or unreadable books. I find this a richer prospect than the alternative, which is to encourage inexperienced readers to despise all writing which is not in accordance with certain types of theories which happen to be fashionable at the time. (p. x)

Second, the elasticity of the canon needs to be stretched in several directions. A greater international range is warranted. The time has passed when British products, American products, or Canadian products could be assumed to the central subject of literature study. Another direction in which English curricula need to be extended is towards a much larger socio-cultural range of materials. This includes attention to literature such as folklore, oral narrative, thrillers, science fiction, even comic books. Yet another extension is to the study of film (in video format also) integrated with the study of literature texts. Opera might also be admitted to literature curricula for the same reasons that entitle drama to be admitted.

A third aspect of eclecticism might involve an extension of thinking about the relationship between the reader, the text, and the transaction that occurs between them. This is not to suggest that

subjective response is the ultimate form of response, for a transactional approach always involves a text. Transactional theory suggests that meaning resides neither in the reader nor the text, but in the transaction between the two.

Fourth is an extension of literature to include the other aspects of language — reading, writing, speaking, and listening. An understanding of the reading process and the construction of meaning is essential for a transactional approach to the teaching of literature. Response to literature is greatly enhanced when students are involved in talk not only with teachers but, more important, among themselves. Listening to other students' responses to literature is the process whereby one expands and extends one's own understanding of literature and its power to shape human thought and understanding. Response also needs to involve students in a much greater variety of writing activities. Since literature is largely writing, students are writers of literature when they write for an audience and with a purpose. If students are made to believe they are makers of writers of literature through the writing process they will better understand literature and how it is crafted. When students are encouraged directly to experiment in imaginative ways with various types of writing, they come to experience something of the processes of literary convention from the 'inside'.

Fifth, an eclectic approach to evaluation needs to be nurtured in order to accommodate the broadened perspective offered here. Students can be involved in the evaluation process without the teacher's needing to feel threatened or subverted. Evaluation may be approached through the

different ways of responding — writing, speaking, listening, reading, acting, scripting, and so on.

Rory Harris, an Australian poet, was poet-in-residence at a high school in South Australia during 1981. Tracy, a student in one of his classes, wrote a poem, and after several revisions gave it to him. He asked if she could read it aloud. She releases her poem for publication; it becomes public property. He reflects on Tracy and the experience of writer, poet, poem, and the development of each: literature, and student as writer of literature. His reflecting becomes a poem.

the poem:

a girl is crying  
from the past she writes it into the present

everything that existed has stopped  
grief surrounds her

like the relative she must visit  
she has tied herself to it or been tied

the child she is not  
the woman she is not

tomorrow her fears will be close like breath  
tomorrow her fears will be memory

her isolation swells  
she will turn it back and write it

and hold it and own it  
it belongs to her

Rory Harris

(In English in Australia, 60,  
(June), 1982, pp. 52-53).

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